A

TRAVELLER'S TALE

OF

THE LAST CENTURY.

VOL. I.

A TRAVELLER'S TALE OF The last Century:

BY

ELIZABETH ISABELLA SPENCE,

AUTHOR OF LETTERS FROM THE NORTH HIGHLANDS; AND THE CURATE AND HIS DAUGHTER.

——— Unknown, unlov'd ———
——— No fondness bade rejoice,
None soothed in pain or sorrow.

Miss Mitford's *Blanche*.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
Printed by Strahan and Spottiswoode, Printers-Street;
FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1819.

TO

LADY HAMLYN WILLIAMS.

MADAM,

To none can the following work be so properly inscribed as to your Ladyship; and in availing myself of the permission so kindly allowed, of dedicating to you my *Traveller's Tale*, I am proud to offer the just and simple tribute of admiration inspired by the judicious taste and

elegant fancy which your Ladyship has displayed, not merely in embellishing one of the most romantic and beautiful spots in North Devon, but in opening paths through the woods, and forming walks along the magnificent heights which impend over the shores of Clovelly, and which must otherwise have excluded the enquiring stranger from traversing those enchanting scenes, so richly adorned by you.

This remote and sequestered fairy spot I have feebly attempted to delineate, by making it one of the principal scenes of the following tale, which, however, bears no

affinity to any local history or circumstance connected with Clovelly, but has been composed at distant intervals of time.

I have the honour to remain,

With respect,

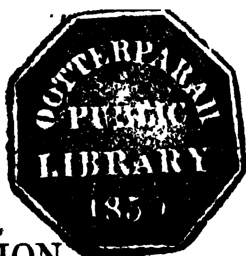
Your Ladyship's

Much obliged

And obedient servant,

ELIZABETH ISABELLA SPENCE.

Northumberland-Street,
Nottingham-Place.



INTRODUCTION.

Travelling through one of the most wild and romantic parts of North Devonshire, during the autumn of ——, in deviating from the high road, I found myself suddenly enclosed by a thick embowering wood, whose deep recesses would have excluded a regular path, if a sort of broad way, which, untrodden as it appeared, and resembling a coach-road, had not directed my course.

Curiosity being excited, I determined to gratify it, by riding to the termination of the wood, when, by an almost imperceptible, but very long ascent of some miles, a magnificent prospect of the sea presented itself, with the blue moun-

tains of the Welch coast resting on horizon.

All was profoundly still, except when the clear full-toned note of the blackbird added the charm of melody to the beauty of the scene.

As I paused in enthusiastic contemplation, I beheld the broad turrets of a dilapidated Abbey, mingling amongst the dark sequestered woods; and directing my horse to the spot where it appeared situated, approached an uncultivated park, where not a human being met my view. The building was shut up, and seemed to be uninhabited.

Revolving in my mind the *changes* of fates and things, to which might be attributed the desertion of a spot designed by nature for a terrestrial paradise; long after the shades of evening had obscured the landscape, I made the best of my way to some cottages which were seated on the rocks declining to the sea, deter-

mined on the following day to explore the surrounding scenery.

Born with a love of chivalry, I had from a boy imbibed a spirit for romantic adventure; no circumstance could have been better adapted to have excited it than the present. An antique Abbey fallen into decay, in an isolated situation, with every beauty of nature, and advantage of scenery, without a vestige of the past, or

One sad historian of the pensive plain:

yet it struck me that some interesting legends might belong to this residence, and I thought that no labour would be thrown away that could discover them. Perseverance rarely misses its end.

The next morning being Sunday, my course was first directed to the parish church. It was somewhat remote from the romantic village where I had slept; and stood in almost as sequestered a situ-

ation as the abbey. An aged clergyman entered the desk to perform the service, whose silver locks added to his venerable appearance. His demeanour tended to inspire respect and attention; it was meek, yet dignified, and his impressive delivery breathed the spirit of true devotion.

The clerk put me into a pew near the altar. It was opposite to such a stately monument, I remained, when divine service was over, to look at the elegant design, and read the inscription, which was as follows:

THIS MONUMENT IS ERECTED
TO THE MEMORY OF LADY DELETIA GRANVILLE,
BY HER DISCONSOLATE AND AFFLICTED HUSBAND.
SHE WAS REMOVED FROM THIS WORLD
BY A PREMATURE DEATH.
A PREMATURE DEATH!
IN ALL THE PRIDE OF YOUTH, OF EXCELLENCE,
OF BEAUTY,
CAPTIVATING IN GRACE,
DISTINGUISHED BY ACCOMPLISHMENT,
SUPERIOR IN TALENT,
TRANSCENDENT IN PIETY, IN PATIENCE, IN
RESIGNATION,
"Oh! lost beyond repair!"

The monument seemed mysteriously emblematic of the inscription; an elegant youthful female was stretched upon a marble cenotaph, opposite to which was the figure of death with his dart; beside him stood a majestic woman, whose features were marked with such peculiar and strong expression, that they could not easily be mistaken, if intended to bear resemblance to any human face.

She seemed addressing death with earnestness, and pointed to the lady's bosom; but whether the sculptor meant to designate her wish to avert the dart from so lovely a victim, or to fix its cruel aim, was left to the conjecture of beholders.

The benevolent could not but suppose the former; especially as there was a nobleness in her air ill according with so direful a deed; but the ignorant vulgar, ever inclined to wrong interpretations, might imagine the latter. Viewed in the most favourable light, it was obscure,

and, struck with the whole, I turned to the venerable clergyman, (who had lingered in the church) for an explanation of characters, seeming to refer to some affecting circumstances in the history of the lady, which, from the reports I had heard on the former evening, was connected with the Abbey.

"The events," said he, "to which this tablet and those figures allude, are too long, and of a nature too afflicting, Sir, for me at present to explain. When a very young man, it was my fate to witness some of the calamities which befell the Granville family; and even at this distant period, I cannot dwell on them without harrowing up useless sensibilities.

Here the pastor's voice and countenance evinced his emotion; and I was about to apologize for giving him pain, when he continued, "all these extensive domains, and adjacent village, belonged to Granville Abbey."

"I perceive, Sir, your curiosity is excited. You seem to be a stranger, but if you will favour me with your company at the parsonage to-morrow, it shall be gratified, without verbal communication on the subject; an exertion which you must spare me."

I accepted the invitation, Mr. Arden brought from his study a large bundle of papers. "This manuscript," said he, "presents a romance of real life, and you have my permission to give it to the world, if you think it worth publication. The moral, which is to guard against the indulgence of violent passion, may be useful to the young."

I took my leave, and the next day pursued my journey to London, taking the manuscript with me, which is now presented to my readers, by

A Traveller.

A

TRAVELLER'S TALE.

CHAPTER I.

In a remote part of North Devon lies a romantic village called Clovelly. It is so entirely sequestered amidst rocks which point to the sea, as to appear at a distance perfectly inaccessible; and the chief inhabitants consist of a few rude fishermen, with their wives and children. One house alone was marked by superiority of appearance above the white-washed cottages which stand in wild irregularity on the rocky cliffs. Embowered in the deep woods which spread over these awful heights, the ancient

towers of a gloomy building might just be discerned; but of its present owner little was known, except what village-gossip related.

A sylph-like girl, of a fair complexion, was sometimes seen to emerge from the woods, and wander towards the sea-shore. She held no intercourse with any one; and, on being observed, hastily disappeared. So superstitious were many of the old people, they affirmed it was the vision of a lady they beheld, whose spirit could not rest, and always haunted the environs of Granville Abbey.

The remote and wild situation of the abbey, which was formerly a monastery, the imposing solemnity of its aspect, together with the strange tales whispered abroad, of mysterious events which had happened there, conspired to give it the character of being haunted. Though it was said much splendour was preserved by its possessor, neither friend nor stranger were ever invited to partake of

its hospitalities; not even a traveller was permitted to view this stately edifice, and walk over grounds unrivalled in romantic beauty.

Lady Valville, now a second time a widow, and apparently the sole inheritrix of this magnificent domain, reigned despotic; for all the household, except the priest, were subordinate to her will. Her ladyship was a rigid Catholic. She gave to many needy convents

"Whose purchased masses proffer grace."

To those in this country she munificently contributed.

In what relationship the young girl stood who lived in the abbey, was variously conjectured. Extraordinary reports were circulated of her real origin; but her condition appeared that of an humble dependent. Neglected and forlorn, the misery of her situation was somewhat mitigated by the tenderness which she experienced from Lady Valville's woman,

and a young French girl, of whom she made a companion. To Mrs. Abbot, Deletia Granville was indebted for the common instruction bestowed on an ordinary education. The little Mrs. Abbot was able to teach her, she acquired with facility; and from the priest she obtained some knowledge of languages.

Deletia's father had been a Protestant. It was his desire she should be brought up to the same persuasion. The persecuting spirit, however, of Mr. Dermont, compelled her, contrary to inclination, to join in their mode of worship: a Catholic, however, she could never be from conviction, though her native piety taught her that it was proper to worship God under any form, rather than neglect her religious duties altogether.

It was happy for Deletia that the natural pensiveness of her disposition led to studious pursuits; and while a taste for literature beguiled many a solitary hour, it enabled her to acquire a partial

knowledge of mankind. Mr. Granville was a man whose learning was extensive, with a judgment correct and elegant. The books, therefore, which Deletia read were the best chosen, and the sentiments and ideas they inspired, had given a decision of character beyond her tender years. An acquaintance with the most distinguished authors had expanded her heart above the narrow confined opinions in which she had been brought up. Imperfect as was her knowledge of the world, and erroneous as might be her opinions, she possessed a noble elevation of spirit, and an abhorrence of vice, which was strengthened by the native purity of her mind. True, Deletia had been nursed in solitude, and seemed born

"To bloom unseen;"

but she had lived in the sublime scenes of Nature, and with their wild magnificence, like the unsophisticated High-

lander, she had imbibed, amidst her native hills, all that elevation of soul which flows from uncorrupt manners, and an enthusiastic attachment to the spot where she was bred.

Sensibly alive to the smallest kindness, she possessed a tenderness of character which had rendered her pensive, at finding herself in the spring time of life, when every though[illegible] almost dragging on existence with a woman she viewed with a degree of terror for which she could not account, and whom it was impossible to love; for there was no spark of kindness in Lady Valville to kindle affection, and the natural energy of Deletia's character lay dormant, for want of power to call it forth. Repulsed and rebuked from her earliest recollection, she was timid, dejected, and reserved.

There was, at times, in Lady Valville's deportment, a wildness which was quite alarming.

"The flush of her dilating eye
Reveal'd too much of time gone by.
For in it lurk'd that nerveless spell,
Which speaks itself unspeakable."

Lord BYRON.

From the earliest dawn of recollection, Granville Abbey appeared to have been the home of Deletia. Of her mother she retained no recollection; and of her father a very imperfect one. She Lady Valville, but how close was the tie proved in vain to conjecture.

In the presence of Deletia, her ladyship was generally listless and abstracted; though at other times subject to long fits of melancholy and despondence. As Deletia advanced towards womanhood, Lady Valville sought less and less her society; and often, if by accident she addressed her, she would start at the sound of her voice, strike her hand to her forehead, and gaze at her with a vacant fierceness that instantly banished all attempts at conversation.

The naturally graceful air of Lady Valville was spoiled by a deportment so imperious, as to excite awe, rather than admiration. The traces of much beauty were still visible in her countenance, but

> " That livid cheek, that stony air
> Of mixed defiance and despair"

wholly obscured the dazzling fairness of [illegible] black eyes, though possessing the brightest lustre, emitted such rays of fire as, " To *burn*, not *comfort*;" and Deletia trembled at their terrible expression.

Her ladyship had one son by her first marriage, now Lord Valville. He was soon expected from his travels. Deletia remembered him as an ill-tempered, spoiled boy. The natural propensities of his disposition were so evil and malignant, that she thought of him with scarcely less horror than his mother. During the years of their childhood, his

greatest delight had been in mischievous deeds, on purpose to torment her. Report gave out, that in right of his mother he was next heir to the estate of Granville Abbey, and that an union was intended to take place between his lordship and Miss Granville; but when the idea was suggested to Deletia by some of the talkative domestics, she turned from them with indignation, resolved to endure any misery, rather than marry Lord Valville.

CHAPTER II.

Deletia viewed her situation as peculiarly afflictive. Denied all intercourse with the neighbourhood, and wholly under the dominion of Lady Valville, her destiny seemed marked out for nothing but wretchedness. Powerless to act for herself, she possessed not a single friend or adviser in whom she could trust.

Mrs. Abbot, though partially kind, she was certain would never join against the interests of her lady. The Jesuit priest always frowned on her with the most severe austerity; and Victoire Maublanc, his niece, in the character of a dependent, the only one to whom she was inclined to confide her sorrows, was too volatile, young, and inexperienced, to be trusted.

There were moments when Deletia thought that any home would be preferable to the Abbey, however humble or obscure; and that even the society of strangers would afford her more happiness than she at present enjoyed. Notwithstanding these ideas she felt, such was the force of habit and early association, that were she at liberty to pass the boundary of her present retirement, she should possibly do it with regret; for every object had long been endeared, from the delight experienced, when escaping the scrutinizing eye of Lady Valville, she could, (in the beautiful repose of luxuriant Nature,) steep her sorrows in momentary forgetfulness. Perhaps no spot is more calculated to cherish local attachment than the immediate scenery of Clovelly. This sequestered village, embowered in woody eminences, rests in the bosom of grotesque rocks, which jut into the sea; and are perpetually washed by the raging

billows. Spread on the verdant height extends a noble park, which commands a rich diversity of landscape. From one point is seen a magnificent view of the ocean, bounded by the towering Welsh mountains, with the luxuriant plains of Devonshire in another direction, so thickly wooded, the pensile branches of the trees are bathed by the undulating waves as they flow to the verge of the pastoral valleys.

It was Deletia's greatest enjoyment, after the restrained society of the day was over, to wander during the stillness of evening along the path cut through the cliffs towards the pebbly shore, which spread in front of the myrtle-covered cottages, whose pretty orchards and gardens surrounded these white dwellings, and formed a cheering contrast to the heavy gloom of the Abbey, in affording a lively picture of the rural scenes of humble life.

It was in one of those lovely

evenings, as Deletia was pursuing her way home, amidst the deep solitude of the woods, and twilight half obscured each object, she was startled, on observing a person quickly glide from among the trees; and as she paused to watch who it was, the figure flitted by her with a swiftness that defied pursuit. The female resembled Lady Valville, and the next moment convinced her it was her ladyship; for, in a distressing accent, she exclaimed, with wild incoherence, "Whence came ye, terrific spectre, thus to impede my steps?—Am I never more to taste repose! Even to these shades ye pursue and torture me to madness!—"

In trembling silence Deletia remained fixed to the spot, lost in wonder and dismay. She long had thought that Lady Valville was affected with partial fits of insanity, and now she was convinced some horrible and concealed event tortured her mind and corroded her peace.

The expression of her eyes, when she looked at Deletia, were frightful, and she was led to fancy that she must in some way be connected with the circumstance which so powerfully disturbed her, though what that circumstance was she could not conjecture.

The mystery which hung over her birth, the perfect ignorance she was in to whom she belonged, and the seclusion in which her ladyship lived, with the splendour of her establishment, were all circumstances that conspired to create no very favourable impressions of Lady Valville, and involved Deletia in much painful doubt and perplexity.

On her return to the Abbey, she heard that Lady Valville had passed through the hall in a very disordered state, and had been closeted ever since with her Confessor: Deletia went immediately to her own dressing-room. A message was soon after sent her, that the family assembled no more that night. Mr. Dermont

remained several hours with her ladyship, and at midnight all the household, except Deletia, were summoned to the chapel to mass.

Severe indisposition confined Lady Valville for many days to her apartment. She went through some penances, which, at a stated period in every year, she practised.

Since first Deletia had began to make observation on passing events, she remarked at those particular seasons a wildness in the air and manners of Lady Valville the most alarming. It was at this revolving period she was now so much disturbed.

CHAPTER III.

DELETIA had been interdicted passing the limits of the pleasure-grounds ever since the late perturbed state of Lady Valville's mind. One fine evening, however, she exceeded the usual boundary of her walk, and before she was aware of the distance she was from the house, found herself in a path quite unknown, and overshadowed by such high elm-trees, that the absence of the sun cast a peculiar gloom on the intricate road, overgrown with nettles and weeds, and which appeared for some years to have been wholly deserted. At a short distance she discerned something like a summer-house; curiosity prompted her to proceed, when she discovered a rude

building which resembled a sort of fishing-house overhanging the sea. The way was so entangled with briars she found it difficult to approach; but this did not deter her from the attempt, anxious to see the interior of a building which she fancied might have been some favourite retreat, from the extensive and enchanting view which it commanded. The Gothic window was almost hidden by the wild exuberance of woodbine and roses. The door, choaked up by long grass and thistles, she almost despaired of opening. After much effort, and tearing her dress in several parts, she got close to the building, but the door was locked. She went round to a low window, several panes of glass were broken, and by pushing it with all her force she got it open. It was so near the ground, access became easy, and with little effort she found herself within the summer-house, which was in a most desolate and rude condition. A harp, with

only a few remaining strings, stood in one corner; and upon a small table some music-books, with an Italian edition of Petrarch's sonnets. On casting her eyes around, she started with horror, and gave an involuntary scream, when she beheld a pistol on the ground spotted with blood. Deletia for some minutes was incapable of moving; a cold chill crept through her she could scarcely support herself from falling, as she leaned against the table. She endeavoured to acquire composure by sitting down, but became so faint and sick that she was obliged to go into the air for respiration.

Though greatly appalled by what she had seen, having somewhat recovered herself by the freshness of the breeze, she acquired resolution to return, and search further into the too probable awful termination of some person's unfortunate existence. The solemn silence which prevailed, with the dreadful instru-

ment of death before her, which had perpetrated the awful deed, had nearly again unnerved her. But her interest was once more powerfully excited, for her foot accidentally trod on something which, upon taking up, she found to be a small case, and, on opening it, the miniature of a lady was presented. Some scattered fragments of paper lay on the the writing was so defaced by damp, that she despaired of making it out, even if she could put the pieces together. She, however, tied the parts into her handkerchief, and taking along with her the volume of Petrarch and the picture, she returned with trembling and agitated steps to the Abbey.

Deletia immediately retired to her chamber; and having bolted the door, with impatient anxiety she opened the case which held the miniature. The painting was somewhat injured by time, but the countenance, though faded,

pourtrayed a young lady of transcendent beauty. The face was that of a Madona, and the graceful air of the figure was only surpassed by the tender and lovely expression which illumined every feature of the youthful female.

Deletia gazed at the picture till she was almost blinded by the tears which fell from her eyes. She turned to the to represent, but no name, or even initial, led her even to guess. She next placed all the fragments of paper on a table to endeavour to connect the writing. Many words were entirely obliterated, nor did the whole contain more than a single page. That page was of such terrible import, that she paused, ere she acquired courage to go on. Again and again she glanced on the horrid words, and of so dreadful a nature was the subject, that, heart-sick and overwhelmed with conflicting emotions, she threw herself on the bed almost gasping for breath; for

the shock which she had sustained was of too violent a nature to again afford her the relief of tears.

It was many hours before Deletia regained her composure. She felt as if awakened from a frightful and distempered dream; and could scarcely credit the possibility of what she had read.

The sad reality of the scene unfolded, though the circumstances were somewhat veiled in obscurity, they were yet sufficiently clear to prove the tragical end of two persons fondly attached to each other, and that she in all probability was their unhappy offspring.

When Deletia rose from her bed, she sealed up the melancholy fragments, and deposited them in a drawer, until some opportunity occurred of further elucidating the mysterious subject. The miniature she fancied belonged in right to herself; and she determined to always carefully preserve it, together with Petrarch's Sonnets. In the title-page

was written "D. Vere, from her beloved Henry."

The suspicions which took possession of Deletia's mind were of so dreadful a nature, that she endeavoured to check each "*coming fancy.*" Yet the proof "*seemed strong as holy writ,*" and the longer she pondered on what she had seen and read, the more assured she felt that her surmises were too well-grounded.

The event revealed in the paper made so melancholy an impression on Deletia's mind, she fell into a low nervous disorder, from which it was some weeks before she recovered. The sight of Lady Valville always augmented the complaint. Deletia at length, unable to conquer the painful feeling her ladyship's presence excited, and ashamed to own her unfavourable surmises, requested to be permitted the solitude of her chamber, with the indulgence sometimes of Victoire's company to walk with her in the park. Lady Valville, glad to escape the cere-

mony of visiting the invalid, readily acceded to her wishes; and when Deletia saw her no more, the nervous affection abated.

CHAPTER IV.

DELETIA was suddenly roused from the torpor which had seized her by the expected arrival of Lord Valville; absorbed alone in one subject she had forgotten that he was coming.

It was in one of those sultry evenings, about the end of July, when twilight gives a pensive serenity to every object, that Deletia was sitting alone in the drawing-room at one of the windows, tasting the cool breeze wafted from the sea, when her attention was awakened by the sound of a carriage, and the next minute it drove rapidly up to the great door. She immediately retreated, wishing to escape before the stranger entered; but he had alighted, and they met in crossing the hall. In stepping from

infancy to womanhood, Valville did not at the moment recognise Deletia in the lovely young creature he had just beheld, for she flitted by him like some fair vision, which "*seemed scarcely to touch this sphere.*" Deletia knew the stranger to be Lord Valville; not, indeed, from any personal recollection, but merely from the certainty that no other gentleman would gain such easy access into this mysterious mansion. She shuddered as she passed him, from a dread of the persecution she should suffer if Lady Valville seriously proposed an alliance between them; for she intended, with steady resolution, to refuse him.

Deletia was too much of a child to retain any perfect recollection of his lordship's person; but his love of sportive cruelty, and the malicious pleasure he took in tormenting her, had made an impression on her young mind, never to be forgotten.

Deletia had spent an hour in her

dressing-room, where she now hoped to remain uninterrupted for the night, when Victoire entered, her face flushed, and her eyes sparkling with anger.

"You must come down, Mademoiselle, *vite, vite.*"

"Must I?" replied Deletia, changing colour. "But what flutters you so much Victoire?"

"Nothing, nothing, Mademoiselle, pray don't ask."

"I beg you will tell me, has any one affronted you, you look so flushed and displeased?"

"Only the Chevalier was very rude; he interrupted my *chanson* as I was passing through the *salle*, and took hold of my hand, though I did not stop a minute. He said, 'You are almost as pretty as your young lady. Tell her that her company is wanted below.'"

"*Béte,*" I replied; "and disengaging myself ran to you."

Deletia, by no means pleased, or at

ease with Victoire's account of Lord Valville, would have sent her excuse, but she dared not; and with trepidation descended below, pausing some minutes before she acquired courage to enter the drawing-room.

Lady Valville was sitting beside her son, who had carelessly thrown himself on a sofa.

Had Deletia studied to set off her person to the best advantage, she probably had succeeded less happily than when now seen, under the influence of disquiet and depression. Her late illness had left a delicacy and interest in her appearance the most touchingly beautiful. The soft languor of her eyes now assumed an unusual lustre from the agitation of her frame; and the paleness of her complexion was tinged with a bright hectic colour, which gave a dazzling brilliancy to every feature.

On her entrance,' his lordship half

rose, when his mother said to him, "If you have not forgotten your little play-mate Deletia Granville, allow me in this young lady to present her to my son. In presenting her, I desire you will view her as one not unworthy the possession of your tenderest regard."

Valville springing from the sofa, took from his mother Deletia's hand, and gallantly exclaimed, "The early impressions formed of Miss Granville's person and mind were too indelible ever to be forgotten. Allow me, Madam, thus to renew the pleasure of our future friendship." He was raising her hand to press it to his lips, when she hastily withdrew it, and slightly courtesying, seated herself at a distance.

Valville, mortified and displeased at such an unexpected repulse, remained silent.

The dark brow of her ladyship scowled

upon Deletia. Turning to her son, she said, "You perceive, my lord, Miss Granville is unacquainted with the usages of the world: she has never mixed in it, and does not comprehend the polite gallantry of people of fashion. You will excuse her awkward bashfulness."

Valville admitted his mother's apology; he affected to laugh, and replied, "Had Miss Granville lived abroad, she would better have understood the well-bred courtesy of other nations. But you, Madam," (turning to her with a smile of assumed complacency,) "possess all the native cold reserve and bashfulness so justly attributed to your lovely country-women; you who may vie with the loveliest I ever yet saw. We must get you on the Continent, Miss Granville," continued he; "there you will behold nothing but vivacity, gaiety, and enjoyment."

"The partial knowledge," returned

Deletia, "which I have acquired from books, of the different characters of the women of other countries, would rather lead me to give the preference to our own, with all their *mauvais honte*, as possibly your lordship will be pleased to style their silence and reserve to strangers. When the heart is glad, the spirits are usually vivacious; and I doubt not, ignorant as I confess myself to be of the modes of a world I have never mixed in, that, in what is called social society, restraint is banished, and hilarity blends with conversation."

Lady Valville looked towards Deletia with surprise. She never remembered to have heard her before give her opinion with such decision. Valville gazed at her also, but it was with a sentiment of admiration, as he inwardly thought, "Is this the creature my mother has bred up in total seclusion!"

A summons to supper ended the con-

versation. The repast was silent and ceremonious. When it was ovor, her ladyship told Deletia she was at liberty to retire; a permission of which she was glad to avail herself.

CHAPTER V.

WITH approving smiles Lady Valville beheld her son's admiration of Deletia; and that her artful design of surprising him by the loveliness of her appearance promised the happiest issue to her wishes.

Few persons were so well skilled in the knowledge of human nature as her ladyship; she had for a series of years made it her study; she knew all the weaknesses to which minds divested of strong powers are subject; she could play upon such minds with a skill so uncommon, as to be able to accomplish any purpose she desired to effect in the most extraordinary manner. Innocence had become her victim; and she was pre-

paring another to be sacrificed to her arts. Of her son she felt afraid; for though he possessed not strength of understanding, he was proud, vindictive, ambitious, and selfish. Riches was the idol which he worshipped; he was a stranger to the tender ties of filial affection, and looked forward with impatience for the decease of his mother, at whose disposal he supposed were the estates of Granville Abbey, as there was no issue by either of her marriages, except himself.

Lady Valville had sufficient foresight to be aware that arrogant and violent spirits are more easily subdued by gentleness and persuasion, than by authority; and, therefore, though she had the most cogent reasons for uniting his lordship to Deletia Granville, she essayed all in her power, to let the wished-for alliance proceed from himself.

Valville was dazzled and surprised by the loveliness of Deletia. She was far

from a perfect beauty, but there was a soft and tender melancholy in the expression of her countenance which solicited regard. Her demeanour was timid yet peculiarly graceful; and the melody of her accents spoke to the heart. From her manner towards him, he could not flatter himself, (with all his native vanity,) that he had inspired an equally favourable impression. But he made some allowance for the retirement in which she had been brought up, and the reserve of the English women; he was, therefore, the more surprised at her sensible and spirited reply, which gave him no mean opinion of her understanding.

When his lordship retired to his chamber, he reverted with surprise to the anxiety his mother had discovered in regard to his opinion of Miss Granville, and the solicitude that she should inspire him with sentiments of fondness. He was bewildered in conjecture whence arose that solicitude; for he knew her

ladyship to be like himself, proud, selfish, and ambitious. To promote, therefore, if such was really her design, an alliance with a young woman, though beneath her roof, apparently in a dependent state, was an inconsistency he could not define. To sacrifice Deletia to his lawless libertinism proved a species of depravity and wickedness, ill as he was disposed to think of his parent, he yet believed her incapable of performing. Valville recollected she never had acted in any important point without having some end to accomplish; he resolved now to watch her closely, and to shape his conduct according to the motives which seemed to instigate her actions. Some years ago he remembered she appeared wholly under the dominion of Mr. Dermont; and now he perceived she was completely priest-ridden. His lordship secretly derided their bigotry and forms, to which he saw his mother strictly adhered, and was persuaded the

severe penances which she practised were to wash out some former misdeeds, though of what nature it was impossible to divine.

Marriage was not in the code of Lord Valville's laws. He always intended to wander

"Free and unquestioned through the wilds of Love;"

and he could not but smile at the matrimonial shackles which his mother was preparing for him to wear.

If such were the ideas which kept Valville from sleeping, Deletia's were not of a pleasanter nature, and tended somewhat to the same point. The cause was inexplicable, of Lady Valville's wishing to promote an union between two persons seemingly so opposite in rank, in fortune, in pursuits. The longer she dwelt on the subject, the more she was perplexed and amazed. "If," murmured Deletia to herself, "I had been rich, powerful, surrounded by friends,

cherished, courted, and admired, then indeed, her zeal would have been natural, since her ladyship never acts except from the impulse of sordid selfishness. How inconsistent such conduct! To be too, under the dominion of a woman confined by no tie of relationship or affection, and held down with an authority which I dare not dispute, is what I have not the means to comprehend or reconcile; time, however, must surely elucidate this mystery."

"But," continued Deletia, heavily sighing, while tears of anguish streamed down her cheeks, "to wed Lord Valville is impossible; sooner would I be wedded to my grave than to such a being. The evil propensities of his boyish days, though veiled by affected courtesy, were badly concealed beneath the malignant smile which quivered on his lip; and the fierce expression of his eyes were rendered terrible, by the dark frown which clouded his brow. They may drag

me to the altar," exclaimed she, in a tone of despair, "for, alas! I have no friend to rescue me, but no force shall compel me to unite myself to Lord Valville."

Deletia was roused from her mournful soliloquy by the bell ringing for matins. She dressed herself, and reached the chapel by the time the family were assembled.

CHAPTER VI.

When Deletia entered the breakfast-room, she found Valville in such earnest discourse with his mother, they neither of them perceived her until she had taken her seat at the table. Something appeared to have discomposed her ladyship; but, an adept in art, she attempted to smile on Deletia, and addressed her in a tone of kindness most unusual.

Lord Valville took a chair beside her. "Miss Granville," cried he, "can never look otherwise than lovely; yet by the heavy languor of your eyes I should guess you must have passed as sleepless a night as myself, and had been tormented by one of the airy sprites which, without ceremony, glide about this prison-

house. Faith, I have slept at sea through the heaviest gale of wind, and do not want courage to fight the Devil, if he appeared to me, but when something flitted by my bed like a newly shrowded corpse, I confess I had no longer a desire to court the embraces of Morpheus, and I have been wandering ever since day-break amidst the gloomy solitude of this old Abbey."

This speech of his lordship made Deletia shudder. She regarded him with a look of mingled inquiry and surprise. He added, "Pray, Miss Granville, have any of these nightly spectres ever honoured you with a visit?"

Deletia hesitated in what way to reply, from the recollection of the figure she had seen gliding through the woods. Ashamed to confess the circumstance, the colour mounted to her cheeks as she stammered out, "Surely, my lord, you are not so credulous as to put any faith in supernatural appearances?"

"If Valville," interrupted his mother hastily, "you have such idle fantasies, I pray, at least, that you will not put your absurd ideas into Miss Granville's head. I shall soon not have a servant who will venture to move about my mansion alone; I have already been sufficiently tormented with their strange vagaries."

"May I ask," continued he, not heeding his mother, "whether any of these sprites, Madam, have ever deigned to favour you with a visit? for, if all tales be true"—he fixed his eyes stedfastly on her ladyship, who, unable to endure his ardent gaze, let the tea-cup fall which she held, and looked wildly at him.

Valville was struck with surprise at the agitated and pallid countenance of his mother. He meant nothing more than to relate the village-gossip which had been faithfully detailed, not without terror, by his own gentleman, the evening before. What had passed entirely

escaped him, until brought to his recollection by the odd incident of some person, he was convinced, walking through his chamber soon after midnight.

Lady Valville imposed on herself, at certain periods, nightly penances in the chapel, and the nearest access to it was through the tapestry-chamber. It had not been occupied for several years, but of late had been converted into one of the state apartments. The housekeeper, out of respect to her young lord, had prepared it for his reception. Lady Valville, ignorant that it was occupied by her son, glided through it; and, from the curtains being all drawn, and the shutters closed, she had not an idea of his sleeping there, until the morning.

Valville, really concerned for the mischief which innocently he had occasioned, endeavoured to change the subject by inquiring of Mr. Dermont whether there were any places in the neighbourhood worthy of observation.

"I conceive, Sir," said he, "the Isle of Lundy to be an object of some importance in the sea view. I should like to sail to that point, if you think I can procure a boat in the village."

"There are some ruins on the island," replied the priest. "If your lordship has a taste for the remnants of antiquity you may be pleased with the sail."

"Will your ladyship," cried Valville, "make a little pleasurable party to the island, accompanied by Miss Granville and Mr. Dermont. The day is very favourable. Not a rude breeze disturbs the ocean, and the sun plays in full splendour upon it; nothing can be more invitingly lovely. It will interrupt the dull monotony of this melancholy place. Shall I ring and order a boat to be ready?"

It was more than sixteen years since Lady Valville had passed the gates of Granville Abbey; she did not choose, after

such a lapse of time, to show herself even in the little village of Clovelly. The sight of her amongst some of the aged inhabitants might revive remembrances she wished to be buried in everlasting oblivion; she therefore declined going, on the plea of being sea-sick, but said, "that Mr. Dermont would be happy to accompany his lordship."

The priest bowed and offered his attendance.

"You are very obliging, Sir," answered Valville. "I wish likewise for the society of the ladies."

"You must excuse me," said his mother, "I have an insuperable objection to the sea. It is always extremely rough towards Lundy Point. If Deletia is not afraid, she may be of your party. My pleasure-barge lies off the shore, not far from hence; Mr. Dermont knows the spot, for he often sails in it, with old Evans and his son, whom I keep on purpose to attend him."

"Deletia get ready to accompany my son."

She begged her ladyship to excuse her going. Much as she wished for the sail, she so cordially disliked Valville, she did not wish to throw herself into his society, or to give him the least encouragement.

"Why should you not go?" exclaimed her ladyship, in evident displeasure. "Inform me what is your objection."

Deletia blushed, and looked confused. Valville interceded for the indulgence of her company. "Of what," cried he, "should Miss Granville be afraid?"

"I command you," interrupted Lady Valville, "to get ready. I guess your absurd scruples; therefore Victoire may be your companion."

Deletia reluctantly prepared for her departure. Victoire, who never yet had passed the lodge gates since first they closed upon her, was wild with joy.

Victoire Maublanc had a gay, laughing

countenance, with sparkling black eyes, and a clear brown complexion, a round dimpled cheek, which was painted with the roseate hue of health and contentment: she possessed all the lively *debonnaire* of the French, and an easy familiarity of address, which in England would be denominated impertinent freedom, but which was so entirely the character of her country, it was natural to her. Deletia had always been accustomed to those manners since her residence at the Abbey. It was Victoire's perfect good humour and genuine simplicity, with the fond attachment she had shown towards her, which had contributed so much to her enjoyment when she escaped from the restrained society of Lady Valville.

Victoire's degagée air, light and graceful step, with the arch expression of her eyes, as she was tripping through the hall warbling a French air, without heeding Lord Valville, immediately attracted his notice. Her dress and deportment

proclaimed her foreign. She was habited in the costume of her country, which was of Normandy. She wore a striped petticoat, with a high bodice of a different colour, and a broad black silk apron. Her dark hair, parted on the forehead, left it quite exposed, and the head-dress was composed of the high cap of Caen, with long flapping lappets. Her bosom was decorated with a gold chain, from which hung a sparkling cross of various coloured gems, and long gold drops were pendant at her ears.

Victoire's mother was an English woman, the sister of Mr. Dermont. Her father and all his ancestors were Normans, and they prided themselves on the antiquity of their family. The style of cap which Victoire wore had descended from generation to generation. In the district of Caen as well as at Havre they were very tenacious of that peculiar head-dress.

Monsieur Maublanc had a large family of daughters. Mr. Dermont was Victoire's godfather. When she had attained the age of fourteen, he offered to provide for her, if she was sent to him in England. She had now been three years at the Abbey.

CHAPTER VII.

UNDER any other circumstances but the present, Deletia would have been charmed with the permission to pass beyond the boundaries of the park. Much as she loved to wander in the wild walks of Granville Abbey, the novelty of an aquatic excursion was one she had long desired. Often gazing on the isle of Lundy emerging from the bosom of the ocean in rugged boldness, as she stood at the drawing-room window, and beheld the waves dashing against its rude sides, she felt anxious to climb the steep rock, to look at the ruins of St. Morisco and St. Helen's chapel.

The party when assembled, consisting of Valville, Mr. Dermont, Deletia, and

Victoire, were desired by her ladyship to embark from a point in the pleasure-grounds, for she did not choose Deletia and her companion to be seen on the pier which is situated at one end of the village. She also obliged Victoire to wear a hat of Miss Granville's. It was not without tears she consented to change her head-dress; and when the cap was taken off, she earnestly petitioned, but in vain, to go without any other covering on her head, except her own glossy dark hair.*

The road on leaving the Abbey wound through the centre of a steep woody declivity, bounded by rocks, which overhanging the sea, opened with vast magnificence upon a noble bay. The bold shores of Merthoe, and Northam Bay, with Peppercomb cliffs, stretching

* The women of Normandy always walk abroad with the high cap described. Sometimes the young girls wear simply their own hair, not unlike the costume in the Highlands of Scotland, with a band resembling the snod

to a great extent, rose in the distant landscape, and were touched in perspective by the faintly discerned Welsh mountains. On reaching the summit Hartland Point was just visible. Lundy, frowning in sullen grandeur now before them, promised nothing very cheering on a near approach, for it was huge, bare, and desolate.

Proceeding along the awful heights, sometimes broken by romantic projections of rock, at others partially clothed with trees, whose pensile branches were actually bathed by the undulating waves, they reached a small creek, where the barge was stationed, and found old Evans and his son waiting to receive them.

Often had Deletia during the walk paused in silent admiration to contemplate the beautiful and diversified scenery, which in so many varied points met her eye.

"She gazed around on flower and tree,
She caught the bird's wild melody.
She traced the footsteps of the hare,
She marked the red deer in its lair;
The birds were hovering o'er their young,
Around the doe the light fawn sprung.
* * * * *
Love through the whole creation glowed."
Miss Milford's Blanche.

Victoire, wild with joy to be liberated for a few hours from the perpetual gloom of the Abbey, forgot the austerity of Mr. Dermont, the respect due to Lord Valville, the vexation she had suffered in wearing a hat; and skipping like a mountain roe along the path, she made the woods reverberate with the lively French air she began singing. She chatted, laughed, warbled alternately as one who knew no bounds to her transport.

Deletia's enjoyment was of a more sober cast, but not the less pure; and for a time she too seemed to forget both Valville and Mr. Dermont, who had walked on in discourse together.

There is an indescribable sensation of exhilarating enjoyment in walking beneath the canopy of heaven in a fine cerulean sky, with every object enlivened by a brilliant sun; and all the animated Creation sporting in the verdant and luxuriant works of nature.

Deletia was peculiarly formed to taste of this enjoyment, for her mind had not been vitiated by artificial pleasures, and she knew none beyond the simple charms of rural life and habits.

Valville, cunning and politic, was sensible his attentions were disagreeable, and therefore refrained from showing Deletia any civility beyond ordinary politeness, contenting himself with silent admiration whenever he turned to gaze upon her.

When, however, they embarked for the isle of Lundy, Valville attempted something like conversation with Deletia. She expressed her admiration of the views

along the coast, which appeared to much advantage as the boat was wafted by the light breeze in gentle motion towards Lundy.

The freshness of the air gave a healthful glow to Deletia's cheek, which had long been absent, and a cheerfulness to her spirits which illumined her countenance, and added considerably to her native loveliness.

Her improved looks did not escape his lordship. "I must prescribe a sail for you some hours every day Miss Granville," cried he: "languor and delicacy are said with the fair to give them peculiar interest; and I have known some affected females assume those appearances; but your languor and paleness arises from confinement, and the want of all the social enjoyments of life, therefore we must find a complete remedy for a cure already begun."

"My taste, my lord," replied Dele-

nia, "for variety is, I assure you, as circumscribed as the enjoyments I have possessed."

"But the taste for novelty," interrupted he, "expands, when the scene is perpetually shifting. Those who vegetate wholly in one spot, want the vigour to partake of better things. The best days of life pass like a dull dream, without any lively spring of action. You, Miss Granville, were formed for something superior."

"Alas," sighed she, "I am formed to glide on without much either to please or interest me."

When they were within reach of the island the sea became very rough, and the access so difficult, that Valville proposed (on observing Deletia change colour) sailing forward to Hartland Point, instead of touching at Lundy. She would not, however, hear of it; Mr. Dermont having said the ruins were fine specimens of antiquity.

With difficulty they were landed, so rugged and precipitous was this bare huge mass of uninteresting rock. Along the top was spread a large rabbit-warren, and a few sheep and cows were picking the poor scanty herbage. About half a dozen huts completed the desolate scene.

" *Miséricorde!*" exclaimed Victoire, ready to cry, " What a frightful place! I think, Monsieur Dermont, if you could not show us any thing prettier than these broken piles of ruins, we might as well have staid at the *Château*; I expected to have seen something lively, quite different from this. It puts me in mind of some of the habitations of giants I have read of in old romances."

" Not of giants," returned Deletia, " but, according to historical tradition, this island was infested by pirates." *

* Lundy had once a fort and a chapel. In the reign of Henry the Eighth, William Morisco, who had conspired to murder him at Woodstock, fled

They surveyed the ruins, which, in former times, seemed to have been considerable fortifications; but the chapel having little appearance of grandeur in its solitary remains, they agreed, instead of spreading their refreshments in this insular spot, to proceed to Hartland, and look at the ancient abbey.

On approaching Hartland, a bold promontory stretching over the sea, the face of the country lost much of its beauty; it was rude and uncultivated.

They found the abbey situated in a deep vale, embowered in woods. Centuries had passed since the solemn organ had sounded through the gloomy, and

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to this island, which he fortified, turned pirate, and did much damage on the coast; but at length was taken by surprise, with sixteen of his accomplices, and put to death. The castle was strongly fortified, and, in the reign of Charles the First, was held by Lord Saye and Seale for the King.

The castle stands on the south-east corner of the island; by whom, or at what time it was built, is not known. CAMDEN.

now deserted aisles. The venerable Abbey, the property of ——, was now converted into a mansion, and the remaining cloisters alone bore testimony of its former antiquity.*

"It is absolute sacrilege," cried Mr. Dermont, indignantly, "to have destroyed this hallowed sanctuary, by converting it into a dwelling-house. I should not be surprised if Saint Nectan, to whom it was dedicated by Githa, for the miraculous preservation of her husband, was to inflict some heavy judgment on the family for such impiety. It is perfectly shocking. Not a trace remains of the holy purpose for which it was intended, except the deserted cloisters,

* Hartland Abbey is supposed to have been founded by Githa, wife of Earl Godwin, in honour of St. Nectan, through whose merits she believed her husband to have escaped shipwreck in a dangerous tempest. Of the original building, the cloisters alone remain; and these form a part of the mansion erected by the present proprietor.

Beauties of England.

where the pious monks sought refuge from the vanities of the world."

"Ah! poor souls," replied Valville, with a sarcastic smile, "they renounced the world before they had tasted its pleasures, and therefore they were content to be immured within its dreary walls. I wish from my heart every monastery in this kingdom was razed from the ground. A few have been permitted to remain, to the disgrace of our bishops, for the encouragement of bigotry and superstition. The archives of history bear testimony to the fatal effects of the Catholic Religion in an enlightened country. Were you, Sir, to have emancipation, the same scenes of bloodshed would be acted over again. I address you not, however, individually, but in general terms. I speak, however, *feelingly*, for I perceive your influence over my mother. How fatal, then, must that influence prove, when extended to a whole community!"

"I wish not," my lord, retorted the

priest, biting his lip, and scowling his brow, while, with affected meekness, he endeavoured to conceal his indignation, "to discuss a point of such importance with you who live in a land of heretics. Though I grieve at your erroneous opinions, I desire not your change to the true faith without conviction. But I rejoice your excellent mother is in the right path to heaven."

"Never, Miss Granville," continued his lordship, addressing her, "be persuaded to walk in Mr. Dermont's path. Soon I shall expect to see our old Abbey return to its former origin, and be converted into a convent, my mother become the Lady Abbess, and you and Victoire the first of the fair Nuns. Be assured, dear Miss Granville, those beautiful eyes were formed to look on something better than beads and idols."

Victoire, who had listened to Lord Valville with horror, devoutly crossed herself, and said her *Paternoster*.

Deletia, alarmed to find the argument between the gentlemen going on so warmly, tried to change the subject, and she asked his lordship, if he had any objection to rest a while in the rural glade which opened upon them, and spread their collation beneath the shade of the embowering trees.

"If you, and Mademoiselle Maublanc, will tarry here," replied he, "till Mr. Dermont walks to the town with me, we will return for you to the inn, should I find a dinner can be provided." — "I suppose, Sir," continued he, turning to him, "you have no objection to a good repast, if it is not Fast Day, now that you have paid your devotion at the shrines of the pious souls who lie buried here. It will be more agreeable to have a comfortable dinner, than spreading the contents of our basket in this gloomy place."

Mr. Dermont made no objection to Valville's proposal. Deletia would have

preferred remaining where they were, but, afraid of putting his lordship out of humour, she said "she would do as he pleased."

They all walked to the town, and soon sat down to an excellent repast.

The day was almost closing before the gentlemen were ready to depart. Deletia and Victoire, while they were taking their wine, amused themselves with walking in the environs of the town. When they returned to the inn, Deletia became uneasy at the lateness of the hour, and the disappearance of twilight. After repeated messages, she at length prevailed on Valville and Mr. Dermont to depart.

When they joined Deletia, she observed with alarm, they were both somewhat elevated with the quantity of wine which they had taken.

When once more embarked on the sea, Deletia endeavoured to forget how disagreeable her companions had become,

surveying with admiration the fading landscape touched with the last rays of the setting sun.

Soon Mr. Dermont fell asleep. Valville began singing, and he importuned Deletia to join him. In the hope of quieting him, she began the beautiful air of Dr. Arne, "Water parted from the Sea," with all that simple pathos the melody of her voice rendered enchanting.

Unfortunately this specimen of Deletia's naturally fine taste had just the contrary effect on Valville to what she intended. He could not restrain his rapture, which knew no bounds. He eagerly snatched her hand, which he pressed again and again to his lips.

"Enchanting creature," exclaimed he with vehemence, "whether you converse, sing, or are silent, you take the heart captive, and to refuse the adulation which you must ever command, is impossible."

In vain Deletia endeavoured to disengage her hand. "I request, Sir," cried she, with displeasure, "you will release me."

Valville, notwithstanding the rapid motion of the boat, now attempted to fling himself at her feet, but was prevented by old Evans, who was afraid his violence would upset them.

Deletia became extremely terrified, and cried, "If you do not, my lord, release me, I shall be compelled to awaken Mr. Dermont."

His quick movement roused the priest, who exclaimed, "What is the matter?"

"*Dieu merci*," cried Victoire, also frightened, "you have opened your eyes. Oh! Monsieur—I thought we were to be all lost—The boat was so tossed—Then *Mademoiselle* and *Milor*——

"Victoire," interrupted Valville, angrily, "be careful what you say of me.—No complaints," added he, in a tone of authority, "it does not become you."

Victoire was intimidated, and became silent.

His lordship was offended, and spoke no more. The rest of the party were not inclined to talk. Deletia felt vexed; and when they landed, Valville as he conducted her home, said proudly, "Miss Granville must forgive, if I have offended."

It was quite dark long before they reached the Abbey; and servants had been sent out into the grounds with lanterns, to show them the road.

CHAPTER VIII.

If the day had abounded with some enjoyment to Deletia, the close had been productive of infinite vexation.

The freedom of Valville's conduct rooted the dislike inspired at their first interview, and she resolved not only to avoid being with him alone, but also his society, as much as possible.

When the party entered the supper room, Lady Valville made no comment on the late hour of their return. She perceived her son was not himself, and as he immediately withdrew to his chamber she admitted of Deletia's excuse, to also retire, desiring Mr. Dermont to remain and chat with her.

In the morning his lordship retained

a very imperfect recollection of the occurrences of the former evening. He saw by Deletia's reserved deportment, that she was offended, and determined to be more circumspect in future, hoping by time and perseverance to conciliate her. He was surprised to find the powerful ascendancy she had gained over his heart, and that his happiness depended on the attainment of Miss Granville, though in the character of a wife was out of the question.

Several days passed away without any opportunity of addressing her alone. Lady Valville soon penetrated into her son's favourable impression of Deletia, though she could not divine what were his views towards her. She however judged it wisest for the present to allow things to take their course without her interference, always hoping an *eclaircissement* would soon take place.

Valville, impatient and weary in thus loitering his time in hopeless despond-

ence, yet averse to lose sight of Deletia, even for a few days, proposed to his mother an excursion of some weeks along the coast of Devonshire.

"Really, Madam," said he, "it is scarcely more than vegetating, the way we pass day after day, immured within these walls, shut out from all society, and the amusements of the world. Your house is an absolute monastery, with nothing but penances, prayers, and fasting. I am not surprised at Miss Granville's pensive air, and want of vivacity, with the singular mode of life which is imposed on so beautiful a young woman. She possesses strong sense, quick discernment, with a soundness of remark not common when we consider the disadvantages she has laboured under, from a life of total seclusion, and the absence of every thing which can tend to render existence desirable.

"Neither, Madam," continued he, "are you aware of the animadversions

to which you are subjecting yourself by so extraordinary a mode of conduct. The babbling world will talk, and ask *why* you have buried yourself and Miss Granville for such a series of years in this horrible old mansion. If you would escape censure, and not awaken suspicion, (and of *what* are you afraid?) show yourself to the world, and brave its surmises. Let us set out to-morrow. Make Ilfracomb the first abiding place, and travel along the coast as fancy directs."

The home truths which Valville had uttered seemed to strike his mother to the soul, they carried such powerful conviction along with them. She, however, warily parried his attack, by appearing rather to accede to his wishes, than acknowledge the force of his argument.

"If it will oblige you, Valville," said her ladyship, with one of her insinuating smiles, "in making the tour of this romantic coast, I have no objection. During your absence I had no incite-

ment to leave my home. As years steal upon us we become indolent, and are so far wedded to our domestic comforts as to dislike exchanging them for those inconveniences unavoidably encountered abroad."

"No incitement said you, mother?" interrupted his lordship, with quickness. "Has then Miss Granville been none? If you wish, Madam, to render her a desirable companion for any man of sense and taste, you ought to have bestowed upon her some of those accomplishments every young woman of the present day, however mean her origin, is taught to possess.

"It is not enough," added he, "to have a pretty automaton to gaze at; there are hours when a man must be amused. A woman, to retain her empire over her lover's heart, ought to possess the charms of sprightly conversation, or he will be *ennui.* Have all the wit of a Montespan, with all the timid graces of a De la

Valliere; play like a St. Cecilia; and, cameleon-like, be full of the most enchanting variety. Be every thing he wishes: now grave, now gay, according to the temper of his mind."

"To what part of the world," inquired his mother, sportively, "would you choose I should send Deletia to be educated to your liking?"

"In Italy she would learn its persuasive language, and melodious music; in France, acquire grace and vivacity; for, at present, Miss Granville has too much of the *penseroso* about her; and, in England, *mauvais honte*, and sober dulness. Miss Granville is yet so young, that, by a converse with different nations, she would soon attain, with her excellent understanding, all these captivating accomplishments and graceful acquirements alone to be found on the Continent.

"Nature has done much for this interesting young woman, but wild flowers, however lovely, improve when

transplanted into a more cultured soil, and become more beautiful by artificial training?

"In the mean time," continued he, "we will see what Devonshire produces in the way of scenery, and try to cull something from change of objects."

"Be it Valville as you wish," replied his mother. "We will set out to-morrow." She saw it would be in vain to oppose him, therefore she yielded with apparent cheerfulness to a plan she was greatly averse from; and although she assented, against her will, to the truth of his reasoning, she was convinced that he judged wisely in stating the necessity of showing Deletia something of the world.

When Lady Valville communicated to her the arrangement for the following day, and bid her prepare what was necessary for the journey, Deletia was filled with surprise; and a sort of timid apprehension took possession of her mind, that some plan was forming to ensnare

her, so impossible did it seem to her, that Lady Valville would ever be prevailed on to travel any distance on a party of pleasure.

"Yet why," thought she, when alone, "anticipate evils which may never happen, or indulge idle fears before I have cause for alarm?"—Thus arguing with herself, Deletia endeavoured to look forward with some degree of pleasure to the intended excursion.

In a few minutes afterwards, Victoire came flying into her dressing-room. "Dear *Mademoiselle!*" exclaimed she, her eyes sparkling with delight, "I have good news to tell you, which you will never guess. We are all going *un voyage*.—Is it not *charmant?* We shall see *tout la monde*, and be as lively as birds. Oh, I am so happy!—are not you, *Mademoiselle?*—

"The *Chevalier*, at least, will not stay at the *Château*. We are much obliged to him for including us in what is so *agréable*."

Deletia, pleased to see Victoire so gay and happy, endeavoured to rally her own spirits, and began collecting together some books and drawing materials, to take on the excursion.

CHAPTER IX.

The weather proved highly favourable for the travellers. The party consisted of Lady Valville, her son, Mr. Dermont, and Deletia, in the post coach; Mrs. Abbot and Victoire followed in the chariot, attended by two men on horseback. — It was not the fashion in those days to convert private equipages into stage coaches, carrying the servants as outside passengers; nor for the ancient English nobility to exchange places with their coachmen and grooms, in allowing them indolently to loll beside them, whilst they demeaned themselves by condescending to become their charioteer. No such familiar refinement of *easy* manners was known in the middle of the

last century. An English nobleman, and a country gentleman of ancient family, maintained their consequence by a dignified propriety of conduct, which ensured not only respect, but made them regarded with a degree of reverence by their vassals.

The old-fashioned brocade, or gold and silver-laced livery, with the gorgeous shoulder-knot, marked the servants from their lord. To mistake the one for the other in former days was impossible; for the plain frock and simple white waistcoat were never seen on a gentleman or his valet.

The first stage they reached was Bideford. While the horses rested for an hour, Deletia expressed a wish to be allowed to walk on the noble bridge, which was a striking object from the window, and commanded a view of the magnificent river, with the town picturesquely scattered along its banks.

"Mrs. Abbot and Victoire may attend

you," said Lady Valville, "and if you see a milliner's shop by the way, go into it, and try if you can purchase a gayer hat than the one you wear. Valville, you will favour me with your company while they are gone."

Her ladyship did not choose to make her appearance in the streets; and Mr. Dermont having departed on some charitable visit, she felt a horror at being left alone. Valville sullenly consented to remain.

Deletia, charmed with the freedom allowed, called Victoire, who was in a transport of joy, in being permitted to accompany her and Mrs. Abbot.

They had not however gone far, before Deletia half repented her attempt to walk through the streets, for it chanced to be market day, and it seemed impossible to escape the groups of people, and parties of officers and fine dressed ladies she met in all directions, whose ardent gaze and looks of anxious inquiry,

covered her with blushes, and confused her extremely. She saw them whisper to one another, and then look at her again, till she began to fancy there must be something amiss in her dress, and something singular in her appearance. It was not *mauvais honte* which made Deletia wish to shun them, but a dislike to being stared at; for " her mind," according to the words of a late elegant author *, " was in such a perfect state of nature, as not to be examined by the rules of common life; for her words, her actions, and her whole manners, borrowed a peculiar propriety from herself alone."

Deletia inquired of Mrs. Abbot whether it was customary for ladies to be so gaily habited every day, or if it was a gala; it appeared to her so absurd that such an extraordinary display of finery was used to walk the streets.

* Mrs. Griffiths, author of the Letters between Henry and Frances.

Mrs. Abbot smiled at Deletia's question. "The mode of dress," replied she, "which so much surprises you, Miss, you will see in every country town throughout England, all days in the year. The young ladies make fashion their study, and dress their employment. I need only refer you to the Spectators, where you will find how much it is satirised; for at Granville Abbey you have no insight into the manners and customs of the world. Dress, however, is a more important concern with persons of ordinary degree, than with those of condition; and you will find in the higher rank, except on occasions of ceremony, it is generally a secondary object; for it is not attire which confirms their consequence."

Deletia was surprised to find from Mrs. Abbot's discourse, how much time was lavished on the decoration of the person, and regarded it, in a moral sense, as a serious evil.

Turning out of the main street, they reached the quay, and proceeded over the handsome stone bridge, where Deletia begged to stop to admire the landscape, full of sylvan beauty.

The white houses placed on green hills partially wooded, sloped to the margin of a broad meandering river, so noble and pellucid as to resemble a lake; the luxuriant trees which overhung the Torridge, with the busy scene of vessels and boats gliding on the water, gave Deletia some idea of the commerce of one of our English navigable rivers, and added much cheerfulness to the reposing beauty of the pastoral valleys, studded with neat cottages and gentlemen's country-houses.

"I like to look at this pretty town," cried Victoire gaily, as they stood on the bridge. "It reminds me of dear France, and of the Seine, on whose banks I have danced *mille-fois*—oh! then, my heart was not *triste*, as it is now, for we had

music, dancing, and laughing, every night. People here have no spirits. If Monsieur Dermont takes me back to that old château I shall die of *ennui*."

"This is a lovely place," returned Deletia. "In every varied point the landscape seems to be formed for the pencil of an artist."

"Ah! Mademoiselle," continued Victoire, "if you could but see Rouen, *si beau*. The Seine so broad, and covered with ships, with the pavilions peeping out of the richly wooded hills — and long avenues of trees — you would think it superb."

Mrs. Abbot, whose patience had long been exhausted, having no taste for the picturesque, now reminded Deletia it was full time to visit the milliner's shop.

Whilst Deletia stood upon the bridge, she remarked two elderly gentlewomen watching her motions, and regarding her with such apparent inquisitiveness, that she became quite uncomfort-

able, and walked quickly past them. They however followed her into the milliner's shop, whispered to each other, alternately fixing their eyes upon her, and again spoke together.

Deletia, quite confused with this extraordinary conduct in perfect strangers, was going to leave abruptly the shop, when the sound of her own name made her anxious to hear what the women were saying, and she pretended to be engrossed in looking over some gloves, when her ears caught the following sentence.

" Is she not, Mrs. Hobson, the very picture of Lady Deletia?—Poor thing! how I pity her, she looks so gentle and good tempered.—Don't you remember the dreadful shock which Lady Deletia's death occasioned in the neighbourhood, and the melancholy circumstances attending it? If all tales be true, my Lady Valville has much to answer for."

"I would not," replied Mrs. Bridges, "be in her shoes for all her ill-gotten wealth. No doubt she thinks, after so many years are gone over her head, the terrible story is forgotten, and that she may show her face abroad again; but if she does not take care of herself, the law will lay hold of her, one of these days, when she least expects it. Did you hear, Mrs. Hobson," continued she, "her ladyship's son, the young lord, is come home. I should not wonder if that vile, artful woman, was to bring about a match between him and the poor thing. A grievous one it would be to her, for if she chanced to offend him, he would make no ceremony of following his mother's example in giving her a ———."

Deletia's bosom throbbed with such contending emotions, that she determined to address the ladies. They held the above discourse at the shop-door in a loud whisper; but the moment they suspected

being overheard, they took alarm, and walked off as quick as possible.

Deletia, overpowered by the emotions which they had excited, with difficulty reached the inn, supporting herself with the aid of Victoire's arm. Sick at heart, she immediately withdrew into the chamber she desired to be shown, that she might in some degree recover the shock which she had sustained, before she ventured into Lady Valville's presence.

On comparing the remarks of these elderly women with what she had seen in the touching fragment collected in the fishing-house, she was strengthened, nay almost confirmed in the belief, that Lady Valville was somehow connected with the melancholy event detailed; and she ardently wished for the period to arrive, when she should be able to discover to whom she really belonged.

CHAPTER X.

Lady Valville, anxious to reach Ilfracomb before night, after resting her horses for two hours, ordered the carriage to come round.

Valville, who watched every turn of Deletia's countenance, saw in a moment that something had discomposed her; for though she made an effort to reply to her ladyship, when she addressed her, unable to disguise her faltering accent, it proclaimed all was not at peace within. His lordship rallied her in vain, she was not in spirits to retort; but at length he succeeded so far as to engage her attention, by pointing out, as they passed, the most picturesque objects, for he soon discovered Deletia to be a real lover of the charms of nature.

The noble bay of Barnstaple, with the cheerful town extended in a fertile plain, encompassed by verdant hills, Deletia greatly admired. Valville informed her it was the birth-place of the poet Gay, whose works he spoke of, as the production of a man of a fine imagination, and infinite humour. — " With his Fables and Trivia, no doubt, you are acquainted? But his talent for the drama is unrivalled, in his conception of the Beggar's Opera; a piece which, like some of Congreve's, is too coarse for the ear of a delicate female of a pure mind. — I forgot to tell you that Bideford may also boast of an author, by some much admired, who wrote in a sort of poetic prose, " Meditations amongst the Tombs." Harvey was a curate at Bideford. I remember, when a boy, being shown the spot in which he is said to have composed his Flower Garden. His salary, I was informed, amounted to only the small pittance of forty pounds a-year. But so much

was he beloved by the inhabitants of Bideford, it was raised to sixty. So great were his benefactions, he often experienced temporary inconvenience in the want of money. According to all accounts, he was a second Man of Ross."

"Every anecdote," replied Deletia, "is, my lord, interesting, which relates to departed genius. — I shall always view Bideford and Barnstaple henceforth as places of some importance, in being the birth-place of these men."

As the travellers further advanced into North Devonshire, Deletia felt disappointed, in not finding pastoral scenery embellished with rural cottages, covered with blooming myrtles, and filled with rosy children. As they drove along bad roads, and over dreary moors, she beheld the most miserable huts composed of mud, and roofed with turf. The children who peeped out at the doors were ragged, squalid, and dirty, and appeared more like the inhabitants of a close

manufacturing town, than natives of so healthful and open a country as North Devonshire.

"I perceive," cried Deletia, "Arcadian scenes and rural felicity are all fabulous. Here the poor peasant seems in vain to toil for a scanty subsistence for his wretched little family, who appear to be heirs to nothing but indigence and misery."

"I grant," replied his lordship, "that in England you will see nothing like Arcadian scenes or rural felicity; but if you were in Italy, or even in France, such scenes would perpetually meet the eye; and, if rural felicity is only nominal, the semblance of it will appear every summer's evening in their pastoral valleys. The children have not that stupid sheepish look which invariably characterises them here. If habited in rags, you will see them dancing with graceful and light steps, full of sportive vivacity, and even the aged sitting in groups beneath the

trees after the labours of the day are over."

Deletia had beheld no appearance of such marked dirt and poverty in the little village of Clovelly, as she here observed. Lady Valville had greatly ameliorated the condition of the poor; want did not stare them in the face, and whatever might be the sins of her ladyship, she endeavoured to cover them by giving largely to the distressed.

The approach to Ilfracomb was by a steep descent, cut through bare rocky hills stretching to a considerable length to the verge of the Bristol Channel.

—— " The broken landscape by degrees
Ascending, roughens into ridgy hills,
To which the Cambrian mountains like far clouds
That skirt the horizon doubtful rise."

THOMSON.

The small town, scattered on a peninsula, is environed by precipitous rocks, and possesses an air of wild magnificenee and gloomy solitude, from its insular

situation, which has been described as bearing some resemblance to St. Helena.

The only accommodation they could obtain was at a miserable inn, situated in the lower part of the town, near the quay. Lady Valville murmured at the discomfort of the place, and bitterly lamented having left the luxuries she possessed at home.

Such were not the feelings of her son and Deletia. The former had met with too many inconveniences on the Continent to be soon dissatisfied, or to regard trifles. The novelty of the excursion compensated to Deletia for the absence of the gloomy splendour of Granville Abbey.

"A day or two," cried her ladyship peevishly, "will, I hope, Valville, satisfy you here. Pray, to what other delightful spot do you next mean to direct our course?"

"That we will consider hereafter," replied he; "perhaps to Weymouth;

you will not object? but, first, we must take a peep at Linton, Lynmouth, and the Valley of Stones: it has been described, as I understand, in miniature. If it proves so, I shall then, Miss Granville, be able to give you some idea of the sublime country I have travelled over."

"I anticipate the greatest pleasure," returned she, "from our extended excursion, if I may judge from my present gratification, in the places I have beheld."

Lady Valville, weary and discontent, withdrew early to a small, neat chamber. Deletia, for want of better accommodation, was not sorry to share one with Victoire. Beds for Valville and Mr. Dermont were procured in the town.

CHAPTER XI.

A BEAUTIFUL autumnal morning, with a bright sunshine irradiating the sea, invited Deletia, attended by Victoire, to stray towards the rocks before Lady Valville was up. Though she was commanded never to pass the boundary of their own park, no restriction had been imposed on this excursion; therefore, like a newly escaped bird, she bounded along the foot of the rocks, which rose in such fantastic shapes, that she was much struck with their awful and wild irregularity. As she watched the rapid motion of the waves, dashing against those spiral heights, she observed they were thickly studded with a species of shells, which, on examining, she found to be limpets;

and a woman who was gathering a basketful, informed her, they made a large portion of their subsistence.

Finding that it was not yet the breakfast-hour, Deletia proceeded to a considerable distance, picking her way amidst these huge and mishapen piles, towering one above another in wild and desolate grandeur, into which the sea made frequently dangerous encroachments. In one of these partial openings which she now came to, Deletia saw a little girl dressed above that of an ordinary person's child, picking up something on the edge of the shore; but, on perceiving Deletia approaching, she took alarm, and ran swiftly away. Deletia found it was sea-weed which she had been collecting; she had a slight knowledge of marine botany, and found the shores of Ilfracomb abound with a vast variety of species, some extremely rare.

She had been so deeply engaged in examining a specimen of the *sanguineus*,

of extraordinary bright red leaves, as neither to attend to the prattle of Victoire, nor the approach of strangers, who now were close beside her.

On looking up, she recognised the same pretty little girl who had fled from her a few minutes before, walking with a most interesting female, who was clad in deep mourning. She saw the child pull her by the robe, on which the stranger turned her eyes on Deletia, as she passed on. The lady, from the transient glimpse she caught of her, appeared to be young, and very beautiful, though her countenance was deeply touched with sorrow; but it was chastened by much meekness and resignation. Deletia felt her curiosity strongly excited to know who she was, and followed her with anxious looks, till she was hid from her sight amongst the rocks. Her figure was tall, elegant, and commanding: yet though dignified almost to loftiness, she had the air of a person heavily depressed by sorrow, and

as if the walk she was taking afforded her no enjoyment. The breeze from the sea had wafted her veil aside, and showed a face pale and wan, yet so full of an expression which seemed to say she looked towards a better world for consolation, as her eyes were raised with angelic sweetness towards the little girl, to whose whisper she returned such an angelic smile of mingled sweetness and woe, as filled Deletia's eyes with tears she found it impossible to restrain.

Deletia changed her course, that she might again meet the interesting stranger, and as she advanced, saw she had been joined by a gentleman and lady, whom she fancied were her brother and sister; yet they did not seem to be alike, except in air and the same graceful and easy deportment.

The young lady looked cheerful and happy, enchanting smiles played in dimples round her mouth, as she playfully laid hold of and saluted the child. Her

eyes shone with all the brilliant lustre which belongs to the season of youth, when the heart is gay, and unclouded by sorrow. They beamed with such fond regard on the little girl she was caressing, that Deletia gazed with a sensation of envy on this family of affection.

The gentleman had drawn the arm of the lady in mourning through his, and smiled upon her with a tenderness of expression which bespoke at once the solicitude she excited in his bosom. His dark and intelligent eyes, full of the fire of youthful vivacity, assumed a peculiar softness of expression, as he seemed to address her with much kindness.

"Happy, happy family," exclaimed Deletia with a sigh, as she anxiously regarded them. "Blessed in the union of kindred affection; joying in the engaging society of one another; anticipating with smiles of tender inquiry the desires, the wishes of each heart but to fulfil them. Ah! had I such sisters, such

friends, to soften the ills which assail me, then I should not despond, for every grief would be lightened.

"But alas!" continued she, "friendless, and alone, without one being to speak comfort to me, to sooth the anguish of my mind, I cannot fly from myself even to temporary forgetfulness; and if not alone, what is there to please in the society in which I am doomed to live."

Thus mournfully soliloquising, she returned to the inn a few minutes before the party assembled to breakfast.

Deletia in vain tried to discover who these interesting beings were she had seen. Victoire, ever talkative and prompt, inquired at the inn, but as the persons described had not put up there, she had no means of tracing them. With reluctance she gave up all hope of either learning their names or seeing them more. To forget them, however, was impossible; and for the first time in her life, she

found there were persons in the world whose friendship she longed to possess, whose society she courted, and who could render existence not merely desirable, but even precious.

CHAPTER XII.

"You look so charmingly this morning," cried Lord Valville, as he took his seat beside Deletia, "that I suppose you have been paying court to Neptune. Health glows on your cheek, and vivacity sparkles in your eye."

"Have you been walking Deletia," cried her ladyship, "for you were not in your apartment?"

"I wandered to the rocks with Victoire."

"I cannot imagine," replied she, "what delight you can find in walking perpetually as you do. But girls of your age always have so many romantic and absurd fancies, that they are hardly ra-

tional companions. Did you meet with any company in your walk?"

The question was natural and common place, but it confused Deletia. She blushed, and hesitated.

"Why blushes Miss Granville?" cried his lordship, remarking the suffusion of her cheek, "are we to guess that some assignation, some favoured friend, carried you out this morning at so early an hour?"

"Guess, conjecture what you please, sir," replied she, greatly hurt. "Without acquaintances or friends, whom should I meet?"

"Then you saw no company?"

"I met a party," returned she, still more confused; "who they were, or whence they came, I know not."

"It is very improper," interrupted Lady Valville, "in your walking out with only Victoire. I should forbid your doing so again, were we going to remain here any longer."

"I hope Valville," continued she, "you will soon be prevailed on to return to the Abbey. It is wonderful what enjoyment you can have in this wild desolate place."

Valville, who felt quite *ennui* with the gloomy horrors of Granville Abbey, (for there Deletia spent the most of her time in her own apartment,) was determined to keep his mother as long absent as possible, and reminded her, that she had promised to travel along the whole coast of North Devonshire, and therefore expected that she would keep her word.

She heard him in sullen silence, conscious that her son would have his way.

The mania for frequenting the most insignificant fishing towns, now denominated *watering* places, was, not sixty years ago, the prevailing fashion; nor were families of condition accustomed to quit their magnificent mansions, and contentedly put up with the deprivation of their comforts, for months together, in

confined, inconvenient habitations, unsuitable to their station in life, to which persons of every degree flocked, as if some terrible pestilence drove them from home. Formerly, when strangers visited the coast, they were always looked upon either as invalids, or travellers making an excursion of a few weeks to view some sublime object of art, or romantic one of nature. The simple inhabitants of these little remote towns, were not then corrupted by the influx of visitors from large cities, whose wealth vitiated their morals, by introducing luxuries and amusements which were inconsistent with their rural and industrious habits.

"To-morrow, madam," said Valville, (observing his mother to be out of humour,) "if you wish it, we will leave Ilfracomb. This morning you must look at a place called Morthoe Bay, a few miles from hence, an extraordinary series of rocks of the most fantastic description. The narrow, bad roads, the

landlord tells me, will render it impossible to take your carriage, but the Devonshire ponies will carry you and Miss Granville very safely."

Her ladyship made a thousand objections to Valville's proposal. At length, however, he prevailed; for she yielded, from motives of deep policy, at present, to all his whims. She had a very important point to carry; therefore, however averse from her inclination, she did not choose to thwart him in trifles.

Valville would have preferred going without his mother on this excursion; but after the unlucky termination of the sail to Hartland Point, persuaded Deletia would not again accompany him without her ladyship, he had no alternative but to press her to be of the party.

With infinite mortification he perceived that he made no advancement in Deletia's esteem. She conversed with him, it was true, at times, but it was always with the most distant reserve; and though she

treated him not rudely, yet she evidently shunned his society. Tortured and vexed almost to despàir at her cold austerity, he resolved to seek an opportunity of conversing with her alone, and declaring his passion.

Lady Valville and Deletia, mounted on ponies, were attended by Valville, who rode beside them. In the way to Morthoe Bay, they alighted at the village of the same name, one of the most uncivilized, desolate-looking places imaginable, to examine, in the church, the ancient tomb of William de Tracy, one of the murderers of Thomas à Becket. After the perpetration of the deed, he withdrew to this gloomy solitude, and here ended his days.

The inscription was in the old black letter. Lady Valville shuddered, and turned pale, as she read it. The words were

"May I find mercy."

The petition came home to her own

bosom, for it was analogous to her own case. She hastened from the church with rapid steps, and said to her son, "What meant you by bringing me here? I did not expect this, Valville, from you."

Valville, in the present case, was innocently the cause of painful retrospection to his mother. He merely had taken her ladyship and Deletia into the church to look at this ancient monument, which was visited by all strangers passing that way.

On descending the hill, the scene opened upon them with all the magnificence of savage grandeur. Stupendous rocks were reared one above another in a thousand spiral and grotesque shapes, appearing, in some places, to be thrown together by some violent concussion of nature; but, towards the bay, they became ranged in the most curious succession, at regular distances, like artificial scenes in a drama, and extending to the

verge of the sea.* The lonely desolation of the place, where no trace of human habitation was seen, nor any living object, except the flights of sea-birds, which sent forth their dismal notes as they skimmed the surface of the ocean, breaking in foaming surges against the rocks, seemed so entirely formed for the haunt of pirates, that Deletia almost expected to see them start from their wild haunts, and Lady Valville was very angry with her son for bringing her to such a frightful place, and desired they might return immediately to Ilfracomb.

It was, however, absolutely necessary to rest the horses for an hour, before they could go back; the road they had travelled was so precipitous, stony, and bad.

Lady Valville seated herself on one of the projections of rock, and said she would remain there till it was time to depart. Her son proposed to Deletia exploring the scenery, but she

declined accompanying him; and he walked away in a pet. As soon, however, as she lost sight of him, she begged permission to take a sketch of some striking objects she saw at a distance; and Lady Valville assenting, she made the best of her way to a fine opening of the bay; and sitting down, took out her pencil and book, from a small bag she had slung to her side. Absorbed in the view which she was drawing, she neither saw nor heard any person advancing, till Valville stood before her. He had taken a circular course, and accidentally reached the spot, where he discovered Deletia.

When she saw him she would have fled, but he held her by the robe, and forcibly detained her. "Why, Miss Granville," cried he, "ever elude me? Hear me now," continued he vehemently; "for you go not, until I have poured forth my vows at your feet: for surely every evil genius has conspired to prevent my telling you

how much I adore you; that I live but in your presence, and ——"

Deletia was going to interrupt him, and snatch away the hand he held; and which, in spite of every effort he had taken, when, looking up, she saw the young lady and gentleman, whom she met in the morning at Ilfracomb, hastily retreating from the path they were in.

"Let us depart," exclaimed the lady with a smile; "we disturb a tender scene. Not for worlds would I have it appear, that we have intentionally surprised them. I had no idea of any person's being here, the rocks are spread in such abrupt and strange directions."

"Love, it appears," returned the gentleman, "can gain admittance into the rudest spot, and transpose the most savage scenes into a terrestrial paradise; for here, I am sure, is no Arcadia to invite the soft whispers of Philida's and Leander's."

Deletia, inexpressibly hurt and morti-

fied at being thus discovered, exclaimed with displeasure, "Why, Sir, will you detain me? I am not too happy, you would cruelly destroy the small portion which I possess."

"I destroy your happiness, said you?" "No!" exclaimed he vehemently, "I would render you blest, if the most perfect adoration on my part can make you so. Oh! Miss Granville," added he, falling on his knees before her, "you know not, you cannot guess, the ascendancy you have acquired over me, I cannot live without you. Riches, splendour, my whole soul I offer you, reject them not."

"Ah! how inimical," answered Deletia, "would the riches, the splendour you proffer prove, where the heart takes no share in such enjoyments.—Cease then, my lord, I intreat, to address me in a strain so displeasing. I thank you for your favourable opinion, but think of

me but as a stranger; we can never be more to each other."

"Cruel, inexorable, Miss Granville.— Wherefore this resolute coldness towards me.—I will not rise from this posture, (again snatching the hand which she had withdrawn,) until you listen to my vows."

Whilst Valville was prostrate on his knees, in an attitude of supplication, she disengaged herself from him, and fled with such speed, that she was hidden, in the intricacy of the rocks, from his sight, and eluded him altogether; but by an abrupt turning she encountered, with infinite confusion, the stranger standing alone, and with apparent curiosity watching her movements. Struck with the incident, Deletia had not power to proceed, and remained fixed to the spot in silent consternation.

The gentleman advanced towards her, and respectfully bowing, (for the hat

was taken off in those good old-fashioned days,) said, "Pardon, madam, the liberty I take in addressing a stranger; but I wish to inquire whether I can render you any aid in conducting you to your" — he hesitated — stammered — "your party. To those who are even acquainted with these rocks, their extreme intricacy would almost lead one astray. — I saw a lady seated a short distance from hence — perhaps you were returning to her — will you, madam, allow me the honour of conducting you to—" Deletia blushed, and in a hesitating accent replied, "I will not, sir, give you so much trouble; but if you will be so obliging to point out where" — she stopped, and slowly walked on.

The stranger advanced a few steps before her, and leading the way, added, "I presume, madam, you wish to join the lady?" —

The question overwhelmed Deletia with confusion. The doubt implied,

whether it was to the lady she really intended to go, hurt her extremely. In a faltering accent, she replied, "The lady I see is coming to meet me; therefore allow me, sir, to express my acknowledgments for your politeness, and bid you good morning." Lady Valville, who had risen to join Deletia, was greatly surprised to remark she was walking with a stranger.

When they were within a few paces of her ladyship, the gentleman gallantly exclaimed, with a graceful smile, as he took leave, "Now, madam, I trust you are safe, though you endanger all mankind."

Valville the next minute came in sight, and joined them. He proposed immediately returning home, for he was out of temper, consequently sullen and silent.

"Then you were not with my son, Miss Granville," cried her ladyship, with one of her penetrating looks. "Miss-

ing you for so long a time, I supposed that he had prevailed upon you to walk. It seems, however, you preferred other society than his; not very flattering to my Lord Valville."

"If it is not an impertinent question," continued she, sarcastically, "may I inquire, madam, the name of the gentleman who was so happy to be honoured with your company?"

"The gentleman, madam," answered Deletia, with a tone of firmness, "is in person and name a total stranger to me."

"Then let me give you a caution never to associate with those you are unacquainted with.—It is neither becoming the modesty of a young woman, nor is it decorous. Remember, Miss Granville, that on this journey, if you like these romantic rambles, they shall only be taken under the escort of my son."

Valville was going to inquire what all

this meant, but after a few minutes consideration, judged it wisest to leave the discovery to chance, as his mother had now in some degree placed Deletia under his special care, if she again walked abroad.

Deletia found it impossible to dismiss the interesting stranger she had seen from her thoughts. Sensible his address at parting was alone dictated by polite flattery, yet the tones of his voice were so insinuating, his words still vibrated on her ear. Great was her anxiety to learn his name, and that of the two ladies she had seen with him; what was their condition in life, and whence they came. But a something she was unable to account for, now restrained her from making the inquiry, or naming the adventure of the day to Victoire.

The declaration of Lord Valville's passion gave her the most serious uneasiness. Her ladyship's ungenerous rebuke

wounded her feelings, and though she was accustomed to nothing but severity from her, there were moments when her unkindness greatly depressed her spirits, and rendered her unhappy.

CHAPTER XIII.

The gentleman and the younger of the ladies Deletia had seen in the early part of the morning at Ilfracomb, likewise visited Morthoe Bay the same day.

They had both remarked the loveliness of Deletia's countenance and the gracefulness of her figure, when she appeared to even more advantage in the accidental glimpse they caught of her when Valville was prostrate before her. A high colour mantled her cheek, and the elegance of her attitude was a fit subject for a sculptor. What she said they could not hear, but her words seemed to be emphatic, and they both not unnaturally concluded the wild solitude in which they found them, was the chosen retreat of two lovers.

When the gentleman saw Déletia the second time, and alone, there was an expression of such timidity and affright in her countenance, with apparent agitation of frame, he could not resist the impulse which he felt to address her. He did so, conducted her to her friend, and then returning to his sister, communicated what had passed.

"There is," added he, "a tenderness and melancholy in the air of this beautiful young lady which proclaims her, if I mistake not, by no means happy. Her accents were so dulcet and persuasive I could scarcely persuade myself that I was addressed by a being of this sphere. In truth she has excited an interest in my bosom which will not soon be eradicated. She appears to be without guile; and her eyes so eloquently spoke, they are, I am sure, a true herald to what is passing in her mind."

"I strongly suspect," replied the lady, "this fair incognita will prove an enslaver

of hearts from the adventures of the morning. My curiosity is strongly excited to know something of the history of this interesting young woman. She had a very pretty French girl attending her in her walk before breakfast. Perhaps our talkative landlady may be able to afford some information on the subject; for in small country towns every departure and arrival is generally known by the inquisitive inhabitants: for it is these petty concerns which too frequently fill up the largest portion of their time."

"It will oblige me exceedingly," said the brother, "if you can discover who the whole party are, without being rudely inquisitive."

"I will do my best; but remember," added she archly, "I saw a gallant gay Lothario at her feet; and women are always most assailable when love is the theme."

The subject here dropped.

Lady Valville had been so careful to

escape public observation, and all possibility of being known, that the inquiries which the servant of the strangers made, were only calculated to inspire a greater curiosity, than afford satisfaction, so evasive were the answers of Lady Valville's domestics; and the total ignorance of the people of the inn in respect to who they were, rendered it impossible for them to lead to the most distant discovery.

Her ladyship's equipages bore neither coronet, arms, nor cypher, and the servants all wore undrest liveries. She had forbidden any of her household to address her by name, to hold intercourse with the people of the house, or answer any impertinent questions, as she chose to travel incog.

Her ladyship was too indulgent to her domestics not to be implicitly obeyed: sensible of the value of a situation abounding with many comforts, they were not likely to lose it by incaution;

for although Lady Valville had the character amongst them of sometimes being out of her mind, they were all so faithfully attached to her, as not to be disposed to betray a trust reposed in them.

In vain, therefore, was every effort of the stranger's sister to discover who Deletia was; and she could only reply to her brother's anxiety by saying, "It appears the whole party travel incog. I give them credit for the whim, curiosity is always on the stretch when people are under a cloud. If you wish to make persons particularly inquisitive, assume an air of mystery in your appearance and actions, and you will be sure to draw on yourself the animadversions of all the old gossips in the neighbourhood.

"Now brother," proceeded the lady, in a bantering tone, "your fair incognita would not deserve the name of a heroine, without difficulties to encounter, and hair-breadth escapes, from which it appears you are intended to rescue her;

and after fighting half a dozen duels in her cause, she will then be worth possessing. Know you not, what we attain easily, we do not value. Therefore, my dear brother, if you are madly in love, (which I strongly suspect,) and have a spirit for adventure, I would advise you to arm yourself cap-à-pée, like a true knight-errant, and pursue her to her place of destination."

"Having no taste, my fair sister," replied he, "for romantic adventure, like the fabled knights of old, I shall suffer the party quietly to pursue their way homeward, and trust to chance for another rencontre. But I confess myself somewhat curious, though perhaps incautious, in wishing to know more of a being who had something so celestial in her appearance, that I cannot forget her."

CHAPTER XIV.

The next places which Valville wished his mother and Deletia to visit, were two very romantic villages, in so insular a spot, that he proposed sailing from Ilfracombe to Linton and Lymouth.

The short voyage proved very agreeable, from the favourable state of the weather, which allowed them to remain on deck.

The sea was bounded on one side by the Welsh mountains, and on the other by the romantic cliffs of North Devonshire, which gave a grandeur to the views along the coast, happily harmonizing with the sublimity of the ocean. They passed the little fishing-town of Combe-martin, which is situated in a small creek, the

houses extending to some length along a richly wooded dell, and encircled by lofty piles of rock striking and noble.

Deletia would have liked to see the place where the silver mines were formerly discovered; but no proposal was made to go on shore.

It was evening when they came in sight of the bold head-land which projects in naked and gloomy sublimity over the sea, concealing within its hollow bosom the picturesque village of Lymouth, which was not visible until they landed on the quay.

On looking up from thence, Deletia beheld, almost towering to the clouds, the church and scattered houses of Linton resting on green hills, but which, from their stupendous height, seemed to defy human approach. Had she never known Clovelly, she would have been greatly struck with the wild magnificence of these singular villages. One of them reposing at the foot of almost

inaccessible hills, the other proudly looking down upon them. Though Linton was equally romantic in point of situation, yet from its vicinity to the Valley of Stones, it possessed a wild desolation which did not belong to Lymouth, always cheerful, from the busy scene of the harbour and shipping, and the tranquil aspect of the soft and luxuriant scenery which encircles the rural cottages.

"What could possess you, Valville," exclaimed his mother angrily, "to bring us to this odious place. It is enough to inspire one with horror only to look at it. To remain here is quite impossible; yet I see no possibility of getting away, inclosed as we are on all sides with inaccessible hills; for who can attempt to climb these steeps without endangering their lives. I question if either accommodation or food can be procured in this barbarous spot."

"A comfortable prospect, in truth!"

continued her ladyship, shrugging her shoulders; "you have been pleased to order my carriage and horses to a distance; and even if they were here, the coach, I am persuaded, would be broken to atoms down these shocking precipices."

"Sit down quietly with Miss Granville on the pier," said her son, "whilst Mr. Dermont and I inquire where we can be accommodated. I will take Mrs. Abbot along with me to the house I see on the hill, which I understand from the fishermen to be the inn, and will try, madam, what can be done for you."

"Done!" interrupted her ladyship, "nothing can be done, except to get home as fast as possible. Well may this be called the wilds of Devonshire! A few poor fishermen and their wives seem to be the sole inhabitants of this place."

Valville set out with Mr. Dermont, Mrs. Abbot, and a guide, to the village on the hill.

Deletia, enchanted with the scenery, scarcely heard the bitter complaints she was pouring forth. Victoire, who considered any spot preferable to the Abbey, did not see any thing so terrible in Lymouth.

Valville soon returned. He put her ladyship in better humour, by the promise of tolerable accommodation. He had bespoke supper at nine o'clock, (dinners at that hour were then unknown,) and requesting his mother to take his arm, suffered Mr. Dermont to conduct Deletia and Victoire through the rocky defile, which could only be ascended on foot.

The features of this village were totally different to the one below. The rustic church, shaded by aged yew-trees, was the only interesting object; but the view from thence commanded a rich valley, in the centre of which stood, on a green lawn, a large white manion, skreened to the north by a thick wood, above which

rose wild and rugged hills. A romantic bridge of one arch separated the pleasure-grounds from the main road; and beneath it flowed the pellucid Lynn, which, as it babbled through the vale,

"Danced in sparkling current down the hill,"

uniting its tributary stream with the sea.

They had not been long seated at the inn, when the trampling of horses roused the attention of the party.

Deletia, who had placed herself in the window-seat, saw distinctly a gentleman and lady alight. She heard the former inquire of the hostess whether they could be accommodated for the night.

It was the same persuasive-toned voice, which had stolen with such powerful fascination on Deletia's ear at Morthoe Bay. She listened, in breathless anxiety, for the reply.

The landlady informed him there were two chambers, and a vacant parlour, if they would suffice; the rest of the house

was occupied by other company just arrived.

"We must not be too nice," interrupted the lady, "but put up with the accommodation and fare incidental to travellers. I am so weary, the hardest pallet will content me to-night."

Soon afterwards, from the low murmur of voices, Deletia became certain the strangers were fixed in the room adjoining.

This singular coincidence totally abstracted Deletia's attention from all around. In vain Valville endeavoured to engage her in conversation. She answered him indeed, when spoken to, but so unconscious was she of what she uttered, he at length said, "Perhaps the people just arrived may prove your new acquaintances; shall I inquire, Miss Granville, and bring you intelligence?

Deletia, shocked that her absence of mind was observed by Valville, rose from the window in hasty disorder, and,

covered with confusion, replied, "The persons arrived cannot know me, therefore, my lord, your inquiries would ill repay you for the trouble."

To avoid further conversation with Valville, Deletia rung for a light, and, pleading fatigue, retired to her chamber.

In less than half an hour, Deletia heard footsteps along the passage: for, in so small a house, every sound was perceptible. She listened; the door next to her chamber was opened, and again the same well-known voice, in a tender accent said, "Good night, dear Elinor. Angels guard you!"

The affectionate ejaculation brought the tears into Deletia's eyes; she sighed heavily, and exclaimed, in the words of a poet,

> "I, only I, have nought to love."
>
> Miss MILFORD.

"I shall rise early," cried the lady, "we must go to the Valley of Stones

before we leave this neighbourhood, and then return to poor Robina; I do not feel happy and satisfied when absent from her. Good night, brother, remember me in your orisons."

She shut the door. Her movements were so gentle, Deletia heard not a step, and soon all was hushed in silence.

CHAPTER XV.

Deletia could not sleep, and she also was up early. To be so near the interesting and lovely lady, that only a thin partition and a door which opened into the chambers divided them, occupied all her thoughts, for an instant would bring them together. Fain, very fain would Deletia have thrown herself in her way, but the peremptory injunction of Lady Valville not to disclose either their names or whence they came, precluded any attempt to meet, and Deletia was compelled to endure the greatest self-denial.

Deletia had much enthusiasm, but no romance in her character. Her affections were naturally warm, but she hitherto

had found no object to excite tenderness or friendship in her bosom. Existence was to her a solitary void. Was it then singular that the only persons who appeared (though strangers) likely to be congenial to her taste, she eagerly sought to cultivate, or that she was by an instantaneous impulse attracted towards them.

Yet of what avail was the impulse she felt. She had been rallied, mortified, and rebuked, for her accidental encounter with the gentleman. She dared not acknowledge those interesting people were now in the same house. Valville, if he knew it, would perhaps say or do something to affront them. She could devise no means how to get to the Valley of Stones, where she was assured, from the conversation which she heard the night before, she should meet them.

Hopeless of ever seeing them more, she endeavoured to conceal her chagrin, when she descended to the parlour.

Valville was already there; he advanced

with a malicious smile, and said, "Your friends are gone, Miss Granville, were you not up with the lark to see them?"

"My friends, sir?" replied Deletia, appearing not to understand what he meant.

"Yes, your friends, the people you made acquaintance with at Morthoe Bay."

She gave him no reply. He saw that she was offended, and endeavoured to conciliate her by changing the subject.

When breakfast was over, his lordship proposed a walk to the valley. "You must, mother, be of the party; it is a short distance, and well worth visiting."

"Miss Granville," continued he, "I will show you a spot where Nature appears to have been convulsed, and thrown into gigantic heaps in the most extraordinary manner. Huge masses of stones almost impede the way, sometimes shaped like dilapidated castles, or pon-

derous pillars, which threaten to crush the venturous pedestrian.* I was in this

* Dr. Maton thus describes this place:

"Advancing into this extraordinary valley, we had a grand view of the Severn through an abrupt opening in the rocks. Taking a retrospect we caught one of the hills we had passed retiring behind the mountains to the south, but still showing its conical wood-encircled summits with the most happy effect. A sort of natural pillar presently attracted our notice, mantled venerably with ivy and moss, thrusting itself forward from the steep with a bold perpendicularity. As we proceeded the declivities gradually became less broken and craggy, and at last assumed an aspect rather verdant and composed. Immense blocks of stone sometimes, however, still covered the valley; distance sometimes almost imposed on our judgment, and we were often about to attribute the grotesque arrangement we witnessed to the efforts of art; but intense observation always brought us back to a different conclusion.

"The length of the valley is nearly a mile. Near its eastern extremity it measures full three thousand feet, but not so much at the opposite end where the gap is evidently narrower. The first idea that offers itself on the origin of this extraordinary pass is, that it must have been the course of a vast and violent torrent, which, from the broad opening on

curious valley with the early dawn, uncertain whether Lady Valville and you would explore it; from the landlord's description last night I was desirous to see it."

"Your description, my lord, will satisfy me," replied Deletia, "I have no wish to go."

"Not go," returned he, surprised, "you, on whom objects of beauty and singularity are never lost, and who have a taste to admire nature in every varied form, to refuse seeing this valley, is incomprehensible. May I ask your motive? A place so full of curiosity, strangers come from a great distance to view it."

Deletia's real motive for not gratifying her inclination was now to shun those whom only a few hours ago she so earnestly had desired to behold. Valville's raillery, surmises, and suspicions,

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the sea, and the more craggy torn surface of the mountain, would seem to have poured itself into the Severn at the western extremity."

had filled her with apprehension and alarm. She had no spirits to cope with his malicious jokes, and therefore she was resolute in refusing to accompany him.

Lady Valville, who never walked, and was eager to be gone from so lonely a place, was rejoiced to find that her son had ordered the postillion to be at the top of the hill at twelve o'clock, to take his orders; for the carriages were sent round to Porlock.

On quitting Lymouth, the road they took was over a dreary uncultivated moor, destitute of a single habitation, or any living object, except a few straggling sheep. Within two or three miles of Porlock, the face of the country became more cheerful, and the dull uniformity was broken by a rich combe.*

* A woody dell is denominated in North Devon a *Combe.* Even small towns, as well as hamlets, resting between the bosom of two hills, are called Combes; as Combe-martin, Ilfracombe.

From the top of the hill leading to the small town of Porlock, a luxuriant valley was presented, in which were scattered clean white dwellings, surrounded with blooming orchards! Corn-fields were intersected, where the harvest was gathering in, and bespoke the smiling abundance of the country. To the left the sea was bounded by the rich woods of Culbone, hanging on the eminence.

On taking leave of Porlock, the road all the way to Minehead, wound through thick embowering lanes, overshadowed by the most beautiful and luxuriant trees.

They drove immediately to a good inn, where Lady Valville found herself more comfortably lodged than she had been since leaving the Abbey, and on retiring to rest, she said she would remain at Minehead the following day.

Deletia was much pleased with the cheerful and tranquil aspect of this little

sea-port. The neat white houses were irregularly scattered at the feet of precipitous green hills. The soft cultivation of the lands breathed a repose the most inviting.

What is called the Lower Town, rested beneath a bold promontory, on the verge of the Bristol Channel, bounded on the opposite shore by the faintly discerned hills of Glamorganshire. To the right of the quay, the landscape presented the lofty and richly wooded hill of Conegar, adjoining to Dunster.

The Upper Town partook of all the sylvan charms of rural landscapes. Every hill was cultivated to its summit, and every pastoral valley enamelled with flowers.

Lady Valville permitted Deletia to walk with Mrs. Abbot and Victoire, which gave her an opportunity of surveying the adjacent country. It did not, it was true, partake of the imposing

magnificence of either Clovelly or Lymouth, but every walk abounded with enchanting variety.

In the Upper Town, Deletia beheld most of the humble cottages crowned with myrtle, and perfuming the air with the delicious fragrance of its white blossoms, and every orchard tree was laden with the rich purple of plums, and golden apples.

She had the curiosity to go into several of the habitations of the peasants. She found neither extreme poverty nor disgusting dirt, but an aspect of contentment and industry, with a gentle courtesy and simple demeanour, which was the prevailing character of the inhabitants of Lower Somersetshire.

The high embowering edges, bordered with a profusion of wild flowers, which divided the verdant meads, thickly clustered with trees, might almost have been mistaken for a gentleman's park. Nature had been so spontaneously profuse; and

Deletia, who was an artist, observed every branch of the trees as they waved in the air, to extend with such luxuriance and beauty as to be formed for the hand of the painter. In the course of the day, they all made an excursion to Dunster Castle, a magnificent pile of building romantically situated, and of great antiquity. It makes some figure in history, having been garrisoned in the reign of Charles the First, and besieged by General Blake.

CHAPTER XVI.

As the gentleman and his sister travelled along, after visiting the Valley of Stones, she observed her brother unusually silent and abstracted, and all her efforts could not draw him into conversation.

" I should guess," said she, " you had lost your heart in the wilds of Linton, with one of its mountain-nymphs, had any such made their appearance, you look so rueful. The fair incognita we encountered at Morthoe Bay, I must, therefore, presume, still retains her place in your remembrance."

" You are not mistaken. Indeed I have a strong suspicion, Elinor, that the

same party were inmates with us last night at Linton. Though no fortunate chance favoured my again seeing the young lady, I will relate to you a conversation, to the best of my remembrance, I could not avoid over-hearing, from the thinness of the partition which divided the two apartments."

"A voice, which I knew to be a man's, broke silence, by saying, 'When, madam, I have conducted you safely home, I shall go to London. I can make nothing of your demure protegée, and am quite weary of paying court to her.'

"'You are not sufficiently persevering,' returned a female voice. 'Woman must be woed before she can be wedded. I have seen Deletia not averse from your compliments, and sometimes even enter into cheerful conversation.'

"'True, and that she is beautiful, sensible, and attractive, I acknowledge. But you know, madam, there are other requisites to form an alliance, to which your

wishes seem to point. What are your views for Miss Granville?'

" 'I do not comprehend you.'

" 'I mean, as she is without fortune, and apparently without connections; destitute of any protection, save yours, how do you propose to settle her in life?'

" 'As yet I know not. Your favourable impression of Deletia I have not discouraged, nor should I even object to an alliance. Return with me to the Abbey for a few weeks longer, and then I will disclose some circumstances which will surprise you, of a nature that, I am confident, will effect an immediate change in your sentiments; you will then be as eager to obtain Deletia's hand, as you now are tenacious to retain your freedom.'

" 'Who were Miss Granville's parents?' interrupted the gentleman; 'that, madam, can be no secret; or how she came to be placed with you? I have never

heard that she is related to you, though I remember her being an inmate at the Abbey as long as I can recollect anything.'

"'Excuse my, at present,' replied the lady, 'refusing any communication respecting her; at a proper season you shall be fully satisfied; in the mean time, I intreat, that you will spare no means to render yourself acceptable to her, and try to gain some ascendancy over her heart. I am certain she does not disapprove you.'

"The conversation here ceased. I am strangely impressed with the idea," continued the gentleman, "in putting every circumstance together, the party must be the same we saw at Morthoe Bay. I cannot divest myself of much solicitude for this interesting and lovely young woman. It seems probable she will be forced from some sinister motives into an alliance ungenial to her taste; and she is greatly to be pitied, if she is placed

under the sole guidance of those who will not consider her happiness, and pay no regard to her feelings and inclination."

"That Miss Granville, if such she is named, has dwelt in my thoughts ever since the subsequent conversation, I freely confess; never can I shake off the interest excited of what may be her future destiny. Of that destiny, however, I shall probably remain in ignorance; for we have had no means to learn whence they came, or whither they are going."

"We will hope," replied his sister, "that the same chance which favoured a first interview, may, some future day, bring us again together."

At Minehead, Valville, with the most earnest entreaty, and the promise of returning to the Abbey for two months, prevailed on his mother to go to Bath. It was one of the places when her ladyship mixed with the world she had never been seen in, and in the lapse of so

many years, it was not likely she should meet with any of her old associates, who, even if they saw her, could not recognize her again. Extraordinary events had altered, the expression of every feature. The former mild lustre of her eyes were changed to a wild and fierce appearance. The bloom of youth was gone; and her countenance was become wan and haggard. Her figure was still elegant and dignified; but the captivating grace she once possessed, and rendered her so alluring, was lost in the air of abstraction she now wore. Lady Valville was aware of the alteration she had undergone, and that change induced her to accede to the wishes of her son.

CHAPTER XVII.

They travelled from Minehead to Bath through the richest parts of the Vale of Taunton; the luxuriance and beauty of the scenery, and perpetual orchards, filled with groups of women and children gathering the fruit, added much cheerfulness to the scene.

Lady Valville indulged Deletia by resting at Glastonbury, to view the picturesque ruins of the Abbey; also, at Wells, to afford her a sight of the ancient cathedral, superb in decoration, proceeding thence without further delay to Bath.

In that city, the seat of elegance and gaiety, it was impossible for Lady Valville to remain secluded. Lord Val-

ville took one of the noble houses in the circus for his mother, suitable to their rank. She did not intend mixing in society, but to humour her son, she meant to attend the rooms.

A Bath milliner in a few days provided Deletia with the most fashionable variety of dresses, and from a jeweller she was decorated with elegant and expensive ornaments. That she might not be without cash, her ladyship presented her with a bank note of a hundred pounds.

Deletia was not dazzled or charmed with the novelty of such a profusion of useless finery: she looked more to her own taste in her former simple attire. She would not suffer her lovely tresses to be tortured by a hair-dresser; neither would she adopt the stiff mode of the day; and though the singularity of her dress excited notice, it was attended with admiration.

Her natural slight and elegant person

acquired additional grace from a few lessons in dancing.

Valville prevailed on his mother to give her masters, also, in music, drawing, and the polite languages. During the two months they staid at Bath, the application which she gave, made her progress rapid in those accomplishments, which hitherto had been self-taught.

Deletia's deportment insensibly softened into something like kindness towards Valville. She felt grateful for the persuasion which he had used for her improvement. Her pure and ingenuous mind guessed not that Valville's influence with his mother for the attainment of those accomplishments which every female in ordinary life possesses, sprung alone from the prospect of future self-gratification. Miss Granville's playing and singing would entertain him. Her drawings would decorate his apartments, and her knowledge of languages would

enable them to read the most elegant authors together.

The restrained attentions he of late had imposed on himself towards Deletia, he fancied had effected the easy pleasantness with which she had deported herself; and that his patient perseverance had gained some ascendancy over her affections. Wary as he was at present, his fertile imagination had projected many plans to ensnare her, when a favourable opportunity occurred. He had just hired a man for his own gentleman, well skilled in decoys of that nature, and he had often been accessary to the seduction of the innocent into the trammels of the gay and licentious.

The remote seclusion of Granville Abbey was peculiarly calculated to favour his scheme; they were almost on the borders of Cornwall, at Clovelly, and vessels were continually coasting towards that harbour, and if he could

only get her safely conveyed to Falmouth, it would be easy to land her on a foreign shore, where she could be neither heard of, nor pursued.

His mother, it was true, had more than once obliquely hinted her wish for a marriage with Deletia, and evidently encouraged every opportunity of bringing them together. Her ladyship spoke much of her beauty, her amiable qualities to render domestic life happy, and the pleasure it afforded her, to observe that he admired Miss Granville. But why, being friendless, portionless, as she appeared, she tried to promote an alliance, he in vain puzzled himself to conjecture. Yet as she rather desired than pressed the matter, he began to suspect it was only a sense of shame which withheld her from sacrificing Deletia to his base designs: that her ladyship was anxious to get rid of her on any terms, though she could not appear accessary to so barbarous an act as her seduction; yet

she would probably take no measures to expose him, or reclaim her, when it was discovered they had actually eloped together, which his lordship artfully designed making his mother credit.

Thus easily in his own mind arranging these plans, he waited now, with eager expectation, for their return to the Abbey to realize them.

Nothing more transpired at Bath respecting Lady Valville, than that she was a woman of title and fortune; but whence she came, or where she lived, remained unknown; her lofty and commanding carriage, her elegant attire, all proclaimed her a woman of condition, and were too striking not to excite observation; but it was the singularity of her air, and the wild expression of her eyes, which made her the theme of conversation. Whenever her ladyship appeared and took her seat, according to etiquette, amongst the nobility at the rooms, it was then she excited a thousand fanciful

conjectures of even now partial insanity, though it could not be ascertained whether she was, or had been at times, mad.

Lady Valville never joined any party in the rooms; and though politeness obliged her to return her visiting ticket to those left at her door, that ceremony once passed, she declined all further advancement towards an acquaintance.

The beauty of Deletia, with an air of modesty, yet grace in her carriage, drew a crowd of admirers around her; but as her ladyship never allowed the master of the ceremonies to provide her with a partner, or introduce any of the young nobility, they were compelled to look at her in silence. Valville always had the honour of her hand in the dance, to the envy of most of the fashionable men present. They rallied him unmercifully in monopolizing so lovely a creature, and said it was quite unfair; he, however, parried their attacks, by telling

them, Miss Granville was a *protegée* of Lady Valville's, and from never having been in the world before, she was so timid and reserved, he had promised to engage himself to her during every evening they staid at Bath.

Valville's elevated rank soon introduced him into all the gayest society that city afforded. He was now rarely at home. The mornings were spent at the billiard-table, and when they quitted the rooms at night, he then resorted to the most fashionable gaming-houses. He frequently dined abroad, and only returned home in time to attend his mother and Miss Granville to the ball.

Amusements so novel to Deletia, made such an extraordinary change in her mode of life, the more she contemplated it, the more she became convinced some scheme was to be effected, which it was impossible to devise.

The publicity of Bath imposed a restraint, and abridged her of those

delightful walks the country afforded; which she thought ill exchanged for the crowded and heated rooms she frequented. Had she joined an agreeable party in the gay assembly, like most young women of her age, Deletia would have had some enjoyment in the evening's amusement; but Lady Valville, she remarked, excited much observation from her haughty carriage, and always remaining alone. Neither was any choice left her in the selection of a partner in the dance. Valville constantly claimed her hand; a distinction which she could have dispensed with, as too great an encouragement to his vanity.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The innocent Deletia, unsuspicious of the plan Valville had formed to ensnare her, on their return to the Abbey, was enchanted on finding herself, after two months' of dissipation at Bath, within sight of her native home. She thought nothing which they had seen during their late excursion looked half so beautiful as the romantic scenery of Clovelly.

> "She sees once more those lovely plains expand
> Where the first flow'ret lured her infant hand.
> No where she thinks the sun so mildly gleams,
> As on the banks where first she drank its beams."

It was the middle of January when they returned to the Abbey. The weather for the season was particularly fine: clear frosty nights with a bright moon-

light, and a thousand stars glittering in the firmament. The lawn whitened with the hoar-frost, contrasted by the sombre shade of tall fir-trees, and the distant murmur of the waves, altogether gave a pensive grandeur to the scene, so much in unison with Deletia's taste for the sublime and beautiful, that she could not resist the desire she had to walk; and while Lady Valville and her son were engaged at chess, she put on her cloak and strayed into the adjacent wood.

Valville, alike guarded and artful as his mother when he had any point to carry, did not notice Deletia's absence for two successive nights, but on the third he had given orders to Brooks to watch and follow her at a distance, then to steal back, and direct him to the spot where he should find her.

Deletia in the meanwhile was rejoicing in her escape from Valville for the evening, and, wrapt up in the native purity

and goodness of her heart, little suspected the impending evil which awaited her.

She was on her way home, after walking for above an hour, when she fancied she saw in the reflection of the moonbeam, the figure of a man rush from the woods and quickly glide past her. With hurried and affrighted steps she was making the best of her way to the Abbey, when she observed two men approaching, and on their coming near, discerned one of them to be Valville. Deletia endeavoured to evade him, but before she could do so, he rushed forward, and only gave her sufficient presence of mind to say to him with assumed composure, "The beautiful moonlight and clear frost tempted me abroad. I suppose, my lord, I have been missed and you are come to seek me, we will return together."

"That I came to seek you, charming Miss Granville," cried he, "is most true;

but in finding you, it is to part no more. Hear me then dispassionately, for all resistance is vain."

"Since the first hour I beheld you," continued he, "my whole soul became at your devotion. To my vows you have proved inexorable, and have treated me with a contempt and scorn insupportable. But if the most perfect adoration can soften your prejudice, my fortune, my future days, through every period of my life, shall be devoted to you, and you solely—Oh! Miss Granville! I adore the very air you breathe—I cannot exist without you—in the hope of attaining that felicity, I have been content patiently to drag on weeks of misery, in the imposed restraint of Granville Abbey. Surely any thing were better than the monastic life you lead, such loveliness was formed to shine in gayer scenes, and to such it is my purpose to carry you."

Delctia, breathless with fear and ap-

prehension, threw herself on her knees in an agony of distress, for Valville spoke in a tone so decided, she trembled at the words he had uttered.

"Surely, my lord," exclaimed she, "you cannot be so cowardly,—so unmanly as to take a mean advantage of my unprotected state, thus to alarm and insult me. Nor can you be in earnest in what you utter."

"By Heavens!" cried Valville, vehemently, "I never was so much in earnest. My plan has long been fixed to possess you; therefore, Miss Granville, resistance is in vain. Ever since our return to the Abbey, a vessel has been waiting off the pier at Clovelly, to convey you to a foreign land; nor shall any power now compel me to relinquish you. Riches, splendour, are within your reach, and yet you would reject them."

Deletia, overwhelmed with terror, sunk fainting on the ground. Valville called to his man, who was lurking in

the woods; and, while Deletia remained in a state of insensibility, his lordship, assisted by Brooks, carried her to the edge of a bank which sloped to the sea, where a fishing-boat was awaiting him.

The motion of being carried restored Deletia to her senses. She attempted to rise, but, heart-sick and giddy, she staggered to the bank, which she had been seated on, wholly unable to move. The spot was close on the shore of Clovelly, and almost adjoining the pier, near which Deletia beheld the white sail of a fishing-boat flitting in the moon-beam. She now beheld her situation as hopeless, and, weeping bitterly, gave herself up to despair.

The low sobs of distress which heaved her bosom, attracted the notice of a person who was hanging over the pier. He hastily sprang forward, and, going up to Deletia, he inquired in an accent of tender solicitude, "Whether he could render her any aid?"

"O yes!" cried she eagerly, "release me, sir, in pity from this gentleman. I am carried by force from my home, detained, — insulted —"

The stranger (for it was a person above the ordinary condition) approached Deletia; and, taking her hand respectfully, said, "Allow me, madam, to assist you. Tell me where you wish to go, and with my life I will shield you from danger; if, as you say, you are here by compulsion."

Valville, who had stood silent from surprise and amazement, now rushed impetuously forward, and violently seizing the hand Deletia had given, angrily exclaimed, "By what right, sir, do you presume to interfere. This lady is under my special care, and your doing so is dangerous. I shall not admit of it with impunity; I, therefore, warn you to desist, ere it be too late."

The gentleman, by no means discouraged by his lordship's threats, turned towards Deletia, who had risen in alarm,

as he endeavoured to disengage her from Valville.

"Tell me only, madam," said he, "what you wish, and I shall be proud to conduct you to your home, and friends."

Deletia sighed heavily. "Home and friends!" exclaimed she, "alas! alas! I have no parent's wing to shelter me; no brother, — no sister, — or even friend to protect me. I am at the mercy of this gentleman, who has cruelly dragged me to this spot. The very home I possess is wretched. What then, oh Heaven! is to become of me, thus unhappy and forlorn!"

The stranger, regarding her with mingled surprise and pity, replied, with a compassionate kindness, "Allow me, madam, if such is your destitute condition, to conduct you at once to my sisters. They are now at the parsonage at Clovelly. With them you will be safe; with them be treated with tenderness. They are

women of exalted excellence; they are full of benevolence and goodness. To hear of your distress is to be secure of their friendship."

The gentleman turned to Valville, and with manly indignation he continued, "Forbear, sir, longer to persecute this lady. I blush to find there is a being so contemptible, as to take a cowardly advantage of unprotected innocence to terrify and molest it."

"Pray, sir," interrupted his lordship fiercely, "who are you, that thus presume impertinently to prove the champion of this lady? Upon my soul she is very much obliged for your knight-errantry, which, however, I shall make you feel; for we separate not thus quietly."

"Who I am," returned the gentleman, with dignified mildness, "you shall know at a proper season."

"Now, madam," addressing Deletia, "inform me if I shall have the honour

of conducting you to my sisters? They will receive you with kindness, if introduced by me. Will you then trust yourself under my escort?"

"Not to your sisters, sir," replied Deletia in a faultering accent. "To introduce myself, to obtrude upon strangers, humane as is your offer, I find impossible. But if you will allow me so far to impose on your benevolence, as to conduct me to Granville Abbey, it will be kind indeed."

"To Granville Abbey!" exclaimed the stranger in a tone of surprise. "Do you reside there? Why not go at once to my sisters?" continued he with earnest intreaty. "True, madam, my name, my person are alike unknown to you, yet be assured, on my implicit honour, you may rely that no harm shall approach you, whilst I have power to protect you from insult. Oh! suffer my amiable sisters to sooth your distress with their friendship and affection,

They are worthy to be known, I am persuaded that it is only necessary for you to be seen, to possess their esteem. Hesitate not then, I intreat; do not think me capable of tendering their protection, and my services, without being sincere, and flattered by the acceptance."

"Such generous consideration from a stranger," answered Deletia, who shed tears, "demands, sir, my warmest gratitude. Yet to avail myself of your kindness, farther than to conduct me back to Granville Abbey, I must decline."

Valville stood in astonishment at all that passed, and seemed powerless how to act. He saw that his enterprise was ended, and therefore he must endeavour to make some feasible excuse to his mother, and at present suffer Deletia quietly to return to the Abbey. His lordship was sufficiently adept in adventures of the like nature, to be able skilfully to manage the present.

"If such be, madam, your determination," cried the stranger, "and you seriously decline the protection of my sisters, I will immediately conduct you home. He then requested Deletia to take his arm."

"We can dispense, sir," cried Valville with proud indignation, "with your attendance. This lady returns with none but me to Granville Abbey."

"Pardon me, sir," answered the stranger. "I also shall have the honour of accompanying her. My services, once solicited, are not readily withdrawn; on the present occasion, this lady's unprotected state demands that she be not deserted. How can she trust herself under the care of a man who proves himself unworthy a confidence which he has once violated?"

"The present," cried his lordship warmly, "is not a time to discuss this affair. The impertinent officiousness you will perhaps have cause to repent, when

too late. Again, I demand your name. Mine, you yet shall have reason to remember."

"Whatever, sir," returned he mildly, "your name or condition, you ought to blush to disclose it. Your conduct reflects no credit on either. If your name is dignified by rank, I lament the profligacy of so immoral an example. If, on the contrary, your origin is obscure, I am sorry your name has not been called into knowledge by any act to reflect more credit on its possessor."

"I remember," interrupted Valville with a sneer of contempt, "you said that you came from the parsonage; I have no doubt, therefore, you are one of those divines who take upon them to mend the morals of their flock by theory, rather than practical duty. However, who or what you may be, is little to the purpose. To unhand the lady, that is all I require of you, and depart from whence you came."

"I am not to be dismayed," replied the stranger, with becoming dignity, "by your threats. My determination is fixed to attend the lady home."

"Come, madam," addressing Deletia, "the night is advancing."

She accepted his arm, and with trembling steps permitted him to lead her on.

Valville walked on the other side of Deletia in sullen silence. When they arrived at the great gates which shut the Abbey out from the park, and the porter who answered the bell brought a light, then Deletia discovered, but not till then, with consternation and surprise, the stranger to be the same gentleman who addressed her at Morthoe Bay. The tones of his voice she had before fancied were familiar to her; but her terror and alarm deprived her, of not merely her senses, but clear recollection. She endeavoured to utter her thanks,

but the words died on her tongue, and she burst into tears.

"Once again, madam," exclaimed the stranger, recognising her with pleasure and surprise, "you are safe. Were my ability to defend you from danger equal to my wish, that harm might never approach you, then should I consider any benefit which I could render you the happiest moment of my life."

Deletia, deeply penetrated with the elegance of his compliment, was unequal to a reply.

"It is proper, sir," added the stranger, addressing Valville, with a dignified air, "that you should not longer rest in ignorance to whom you owe the loss of the enterprise in which you were engaged. I should be proud, in so interesting a cause, to give you, sir, whatever satisfaction you may require. Your commands may be sent within the next four days to the Earl of Dorringcourt, at the

Reverend Mr. Arden's parsonage-house, Clovelly."

His lordship took leave with manly grace, leaving Deletia standing in the court in consternation and dismay.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Lady Valville, who had been much alarmed at the sudden departure of her son, together with the long absence of Deletia, the moment she heard their voices in the hall, came out to meet them, and anxiously inquired where they had been.

His lordship, assuming a degree of composure which he did not feel, exclaimed with a malicious smile, "Having discovered that Miss Granville is fond of moonlight rambles, I would fain have performed Romeo to her Juliet, but she played me false, for she was near eloping with one more favoured, had I not watched her closely."

Deletia, full of indignation at a repre-

sentation wearing unfortunately some semblance of truth, interrupted Valville. "While, my lord, you relate part of the occurrences of the evening, at least, in justice to myself I must add, your insulting conduct, your threatened detention, which occasioned the humane interference of the stranger, who rescued me from a situation the most distressing."

Lady Valville listened with displeasure to more than she wished to hear.

"Retire, Miss Granville," cried she, "to your apartment. Your spirits are so hurried, and your frame so agitated, it appears to me you know not what you say."

"I have simply stated the truth," replied she, in a mournful accent; "and I have nothing further to urge in my defence."

"If young ladies," retorted Lady Valville, "are so romantic as to choose moonlight rambles, it is proper they should be

cured of them, by some alarming method; my son took a very proper course, and I thank him for it."

"We will inquire," added she, "about this enterprising adventurer, and whose protection you had the temerity to seek. I thought you knew, Deletia, that I before prohibited any stranger coming to the Abbey. Retire, and let me hear no more of such romantic folly."

Lady Valville having so unexpectedly taken up his cause, elated him beyond measure. Her sharp reproof to Deletia happily released him from what threatened to prove a very serious and awkward affair.

His lordship exclaimed, with a sarcastic laugh, as Deletia quitted the room, "The next time, Miss Granville, you wish for a moonlight scene, I am persuaded that my Lord Dorringcourt will be happy to attend you. If you only signify where it is to be, I am certain he will be on the look-out."

Deletia disdaining a reply, left the drawing-room in silent indignation.

Now in the solitude of her own apartment, she threw herself into a chair, and gave unrestrained freedom to tears. She fell into a train of the most mournful reflections: yet amidst the indignant sorrow which oppressed her, a ray of pleasure broke forth, as she dwelt on the remembrance of the noble and manly conduct of the stranger. "He is, then," exclaimed she, mentally, "Lord Dorringcourt, a person of high degree; elevated in goodness as he is in rank: generous, feeling, and humane. He not merely commiserated my situation, but, with the tenderest delicacy, benevolently offered me the protection of his sisters. Those interesting and beautiful women I so much admired, so ardently desired to know, when they hailed me with looks of such benignant kindness in my late excursion. Alas!" murmured she, "how adverse is my destiny! Compelled

to decline a friendship which would prove so soothing; imprisoned here to endure only wretchedness, and without the possibility of escaping the snares of Valville!"

"Had Lord Dorringcourt acted otherwise than he did, how greatly would he have fallen in my estimation. He beheld me alone and friendless, he took no ungenerous advantage; but, with a delicacy which bespoke the excellence of his heart, he seemed almost afraid to wound and offend. Should we meet no more, most amiable, yet dangerous stranger, in the heart of Deletia Granville ever will you dwell with sentiments of gratitude and admiration!"

To many of Lord Valville's gallantries his mother was no stranger. During the period he was abroad, he had drawn upon her for large sums of money. She certainly believed the persecution Deletia had suffered; but her ladyship had powerful motives, only known to herself,

for at present contradicting all Deletia uttered.

Valville was but too ready to let the matter drop. His mother tried every method to divert his attention, and amuse him for the remainder of the evening. When his lordship withdrew for the night, she requested him to breakfast with her in her dressing-room, having some matters of importance to reveal.

Lord Dorringcourt in the mean time slowly returned to the parsonage-house, contiguous to the small village of Clovelly, pursued by the pale image of Deletia Granville. For some moments after he parted from her, he stood fixed to the spot in silent wonder and contemplation of the occurrences of the evening.

The agitation of Deletia's frame, the varied emotions of her speaking countenance, indistinctly as he had seen it, excited a tender interest, a tremulous emotion in his bosom, to which he had

hitherto been a stranger. The anguish she showed, the voice of distress so touching and sad, long after she disappeared, still vibrated on his ear. The gentle pressure of her arm too, as he led her, he seemed yet to feel; and, though he lamented her steady refusal of all protection from his sisters, he could not but admire the propriety of her conduct, in not hastily accepting the aid of strangers, who might, for aught she knew, also deceive and betray her.

Lord Dorringcourt was of opinion, his interference in the young lady's cause would not be passed over without a challenge. He was ready to meet the gentleman in her defence, not, however, on terms of hostility, but on those of friendly amity, to persuade, to convince him, if possible, of his error; for Lord Dorringcourt was not one of those modern characters, who seek for redress from the ball of a pistol. The most manly courage animated his bosom, but it

so largely partook of humanity, he would not willingly injure a foe; but, pitying human frailty, he was ready to forgive and conciliate.

Valville, like all depraved characters, was a coward at heart. He did not choose, in sending Lord Dorringcourt a challenge, to risk his life in Miss Granville's cause, as the report of the evening's adventure, if spread abroad, would redound little to his honour. He did not intend, however, to tamely submit to his lordship's interference, but wait for a favourable opportunity to do him a secret injury.

CHAPTER XIX.

Lord Dorringcourt and his two sisters were at this present time on a visit to the Rev. Mr. Arden, who lately had been endowed with the living of Clovelly. He was related to his lordship. A similarity of taste, sentiment, and feeling had, during their college fellowship, established a warm friendship and close intimacy between this young nobleman and his cousin. He had described to his lordship, by letter, the romantic situation of his house, and he claimed his promise of a visit, on a union of affection which had recently taken place between himself and an amiable young woman, to whom he had been long attached.

Lord Dorringcourt and his sisters were

just setting out on an excursion, when the letter arrived. Perpetual change of scene, and the soft salubrious air of Devonshire, during the winter months, was prescribed for his lordship's sister, Lady Robina Somerville, who, since the death of her husband, had fallen into melancholy and ill health.

Dorringcourt and his sister, Lady Elinor Arden, had travelled with her from place to place. During their short excursion to Linton and Lymouth they had left Lady Robina at Clovelly with her children.

When Lord Dorringcourt returned to the parsonage, his younger sister exclaimed, "These wild scenes appear just the place for romantic adventure, and by the length of your absence I expect to be amused with the detail of something wonderful."

"That I have met with an adventure," replied his lordship smiling, "is most true; but whether the result may

prove agreeable is uncertain, the rescue of a fair lady is seldom submitted to with impunity."

"The rescue of a fair lady!" interrupted she eagerly; "in truth, my lord, you are become a hero, and I hope you mean to shiver a lance in consequence; so perilous an undertaking cannot end without something of the sort. Do satisfy me with all the particulars."

"Perilous my adventure may prove," said Dorringcourt, "in more senses than one; for if I am not called to account for carrying off in triumph so lovely a prize, I am in such imminent danger of losing my heart, you must not wonder if, like poor Orlando, you find my love ditties hanging on every tree in praise of my fair Rosalind."

"This is romantic indeed," exclaimed Lady Elinor laughing. "Do, brother, gratify my curiosity, by relating all the particulars of this pretty moonlight adventure."

Lord Dorringcourt detailed to his friends the history of the evening's rencontre.

"The young lady," said the Reverend Mr. Arden, "who is an inhabitant of Granville Abbey, is much to be pitied, if report speaks truth. She has been immured all her days within the walls of that gloomy old mansion with an eccentric woman of quality, whom none of the neighbourhood have seen for these last sixteen years. Since the return of her son, Lord Valville, he prevailed on her ladyship to make a few weeks' excursion. I understand they are just come back to the Abbey, but I have never seen any of the party, nor am I likely, for they do not attend my church. Lady Valville is a Catholic, as well as all her household. She however gives largely in charity to my poor parishioners, through the medium of the priest who lives with her."

"This then," cried Lady Elinor, "must certainly be the extraordinary

woman who travelled *incog.*; and Miss Granville, I think you called her, the beautiful young girl we saw at Ilfracombe and Morthoe Bay, who was of her party."

"The same," answered Dorringcourt. "To whom, Arden, does the Abbey in right belong?—as Miss Granville's name attaches to it."

"Such a mystery," returned Mr. Arden, "is connected with every person and circumstance belonging to this ancient building, that it is impossible for me to give you any satisfactory information on the subject. I have had little curiosity to investigate the matter, yet it is likely to interest the inquisitive, who are fond of the marvellous."

"I should be glad to view the Abbey and park," interrupted Lady Elinor, "as a magnificent old place, no doubt it is shown to strangers, as one of the lions in this neighbourhood."

"I do not believe any person is ad-

mitted; to satisfy your ladyship, I will, however, inquire."—

When the female domestic answered the bell, "Mr. Arden asked on what days the Abbey was shown to visitors."

"Shur, Sur!" cried the girl, looking aghast, "no living purson do ever zee the Abbey. You would not shur go where the ghosts do walk aboot they do zay, without ceremony. My Ledy Valville lets none cume within the gates, and shoots up the pur thing, the Miss Deletia, as if she was in a prison. It was to be shur talked aboot the young lord marrying hir. Pur shoul! she had better go to hir grave."

"I perceive, brother," said Lady Elinor laughing, "you are coming into the very spirit of romance. If you will accept of me for a page, I will put on my doublet and hose, and we will take this enchanted castle by storm to get possession of the lady."

"I am afraid, Elinor," said his lord-

ship, when the young woman withdrew, "we must relinquish all hope of seeing this mysterious Abbey. Even the proffer of a visit from you to the young lady, I question not, will be refused."

"I will," returned her ladyship, "at least make an attempt to gain admittance. Like the female Quixote, I will set out to-morrow morning in search of adventure; and whoever did so without meeting abundance?"

As she finished speaking, Lady Robina Somerville entered the room. "Sit down, sister," continued she, "and I will tell you all the wonders of this neighbourhood. They would prove a subject for a second Castle of Otranto."

Her ladyship gave a melancholy smile, and placed herself beside Elinor, who, in her lively manner, detailed all she had just heard from her brother.

When she ended, Lady Robina replied, "I am afraid, my dear sister, some of the reports which prevail, are not un-

founded; and they are of a very mournful nature. In my almost infant years, I have a perfect remembrance, when, sitting on the knee of our sainted mother, of hearing her relate to our father, some melancholy particulars connected with the possessors of Granville Abbey. The interest and curiosity of children is always powerfully awakened by dismal and horrid tales, which the attainment of riper years never totally effaces. It convinces me," added she, "of the necessity of circumspection before them; and not to terrify their young minds, so quickly alive to the marvellous and terrible, with which nursery gossip unfortunately too much abounds. From the earliest dawn of perception in my precious boy and girl, I have never allowed them to be out of my sight, except during the hours of rest. I have watched assiduously every turn of their opening intellect; by which circumstance they love my company,

and return my caresses with a thousand endearments a mother who does not train her children herself can never know."

"But," proceeded Lady Robina, "I am strangely digressing from my subject."

"A Lady Deletia Granville, whom I strongly suspect to have been the mother of the Miss Granville now living at the Abbey, was the bosom friend of the late Countess of Dorringcourt. Her ladyship's sudden death, which was veiled in mystery, excited infinite surprise amongst those who had known her; for though Lady Deletia lived in almost total seclusion after her marriage with Mr. Granville, events of the most shocking nature were whispered abroad, and occasioned such grief to our mother, that it was long before she recovered her spirits. The tale I in childhood listened to with eagerness is now revived in my memory, by the incidents of this evening."

Lady Robina then told her brother

and sister what the circumstances were.

"It appears from your ladyship's conversation," said the Rev. Mr. Arden, "that a monument erected in our church bears some analogy to your story. The singularity of the device, the elegance of the figures, together with the touching inscription, I have often contemplated with curiosity and attention. You must look at it to-morrow."

CHAPTER XX.

The Earl of Dorringcourt was a young nobleman recently come to his title. He inherited a noble estate in Warwickshire, by the death of his father. Blessed with wise and sensible parents, though an only son, his lordship had been educated in no false indulgences, neither had he seen at public schools any of the extravagances with which they abound. A private tutor prepared him for the university; and, on leaving it, a shining model of exemplary conduct, and brilliant talents, he travelled with the Reverend Dr. N—— for three years, visiting on their way all the most splendid and polished courts in Europe. Lord Dorringcourt's principles were too steadily fixed

to become corrupted by the laxity of foreign manners and habits. He had, indeed, acquired the easy elegance, the *inborn grace* of the finished gentleman. He had travelled for the attainment of knowledge, and he acquired it.

Lord Dorringcourt's air was grand and commanding, but the dignity of his person, though it inspired respect, was so mingled with unstudied ease as courted attention; and his countenance beamed with such benignity, that it bore faithful testimony of the excellence of his heart. With a native tenderness of character which alone belongs to the truly brave, Lord Arden was called home by the death of his father, the Earl of Dorringcourt, to take possession of his new title. He promised to supply to his sister Elinor the loss sustained in their estimable parent. She wished to have taken up her future abode with a maiden aunt, but Lord Dorringcourt would not permit her to leave Oakley Park. He

made her promise that she would constantly reside with him, and he invited their aunt to spend some months with them; to which she consented, on condition of their returning the visit.

The late earl left two daughters, Robina and Elinor. The former had married, at the age of eighteen, the son of a Shetland nobleman. Mr. Somerville was carried off in the prime of life by a malignant fever, leaving his lady an inconsolable widow, with two infant children.

Lady Robina's had been a union of affection, not interest; for her husband possessed a small independence. It proved, however, sufficient for their moderate desires; and, in a remote corner of the Shetland Isles, where he amused himself in farming his own estate, he lived with a degree of comparative splendour, which, in England, would barely have allowed the necessaries of life.

At the period Mr. Somerville married Lady Robina Arden, she possessed all the brilliancy of youthful beauty. Her figure was tall, slight, and well formed. Her complexion was fair as the mountain-snow, and was only equalled by her sister's; yet the expression of their features was different. Lady Robina's eyes, celestial blue, beamed with a sweetness which bespoke the gentleness of her disposition. There was something angelic in her smile, but of late she was always in tears, and she might have sat for a Niobe. Her fair ringlets were now totally hid by the widow's cap she wore.

But the loveliness of Lady Robina Somerville's person was her least perfection; even her fine accomplishments attracted less admiration than the esteem which she excited, by that genuine piety and meek resignation which exalted her character; and her countenance was illumined with an expression at once heavenly and prepossessing.

Lady Robina did not absolutely shun society, but since her widowhood, she had withdrawn from gay company, and the diversions of the world. Her taste for reading, which had always pointed to serious subjects, was now directed to those works which contained and illustrated the solid truths of the Gospel, and promised her unbounded felicity hereafter.

Lady Elinor had too great a veneration for her sister's character, either to intrude on her grief, or her religious opinions, by any ill-timed or offensive raillery. If she did not enter fully into her sentiments, she so entirely loved and respected Lady Robina, that she regarded her as one of the most excellent and perfect of human beings.

Though they were totally opposite in their pursuits, yet they were never at ease if many hours divided them. Neither knew a care or joy which was not transferred into the bosom of the other.

Lady Elinor was only seventeen; she was full of vivacity and sportive wit. There was a playful expression about her mouth, when dimpled with smiles, that gave an archness to every feature. Her dark eyes were like two radiant stars, yet beamed with sweetness. No accomplishment had been spared by the countess their mother, to render the sisters independent of ordinary society. The superior resources which they both possessed placed them high above the class of modern fine ladies. It was not with them necessary to go abroad to seek amusement. In *home* centred their principal joy; and although their rank rendered it proper they should at stated times mix in the fashionable world, they always returned satisfied to the tranquil enjoyments and quiet pleasures of Oakley Park.

Such was the family of the Dorringcourts.

CHAPTER XXI.

Valville breakfasted in his mother's dressing-room, according to appointment. They were several hours together, and the result of the conference produced the following letter to Deletia.

"To Miss Granville.

"Dear Miss Granville,

"I place the fullest confidence in the native sweetness of your disposition for pardon. To dwell on the past would only be a recurrence of evils to awaken your just indignation. I seek not to palliate my conduct, nor to offer a recantation. The only reparation I can make you, is the offer of my hand. A declaration of my passion

you have long had, and you are not ignorant that my happiness is entirely at your disposal.

"Lady Valville sanctions and permits this address. Discourage it not, loveliest Miss Granville, but accept the entire devotion of

"Your obedient servant,

"Tuesday. VALVILLE."

Deletia was too much surprised and perplexed at the contents of his lordship's letter to be able for some hours to give it a reply. The haughty style in which it was couched, and the proud humility that breathed in every line, excited her just indignation. Yet she was astonished, knowing the freedom of his opinions, the laxity of his principles, at the offer of marriage; more particularly with the sanction of his mother. It was inconsistent with his natural character to ally himself with a person in evidently a dependent state; and the more she con-

sidered his proposals, the more she felt at a loss and perplexed.

Lady Valville she knew to be led away by the most ambitious views; she had closely observed her character, she had made it her study from the time she was capable of reflection. The singular habits of her ladyship's life, the wild expression of her countenance, the arrogance of her manner, her reserved conversation, with nothing to conciliate and attach; all confirmed Deletia in opinion that some interested purpose was to be effected by the present offer, which it was impossible to develope.

Deletia resolved to inquire of Lady Valville her motive for urging a union with her son, so adverse to her own inclination, and to be informed on what ground she assumed authority over her. It required, however, some consideration in what mode to address her ladyship; but none, at once to give Lord Valville a refusal.

Deletia thus replied to him.

"To Lord Valville.

"The proposal with which your lordship has honoured me, excites the most profound astonishment.

"My gratitude can only be evinced by my sincerity, and I must beg leave positively to decline any renewal of the subject. Thanks and acknowledgments are the utmost returns I can make to the great distinction you confer on

"Your lordship's

"Most obliged servant,

"Wednesday. DELETIA GRANVILLE."

The issue of this reply Deletia awaited in painful apprehension, assured that it would draw on her, not merely the displeasure of Lady Valville, but the most violent reproaches, not to say persecution of her son, which she armed herself to meet, when they assembled at dinner.

Young as Deletia was, her character had been marked by fortitude. She had been very early left to herself, which strengthens the power of reflection. She had, by reading the best authors on ethics and pure philosophy, been instructed to act with decision and perseverance. She had also, from writings of higher authority, learnt to respect virtue, and to entertain proper abhorrence of vice. She found that the good were often distressed and tried with the heaviest misfortunes, whilst the worthless were permitted calmly to sail on the sea of life unruffled by the slightest breeze. It was true that Deletia had not been blessed with the powerful example of all those amiable and attaching qualities of the heart which impress and direct young minds in the paths of rectitude and honour. The picture was reversed, but often impressions are equally powerful in their effect, where the understanding has strength to resist dangerous influences.

Deletia fancied she saw in Lady Valville an instance how unavailing riches and vast possessions proved for the attainment of happiness; and that even brilliant talents, when the passions are not under proper controul, will not purchase peace of mind.

Valville scarcely took time to peruse Deletia's rejection, when, with eyes sparkling with fury and indignation, he hastened to his mother's dressing-room.

"Fool that I was," cried he, walking passionately up and down, clenching the letter in his hand, "to subject myself to this insolent girl's refusal. I ought to have carried into effect my purpose of the former evening."

"Read, madam," throwing the letter on the table, "the haughty impertinence of Miss Granville's reply. She has been well tutored by your ladyship, it should seem, in humility and submission. Were she but once mine I would soon teach

her that no woman was born to have a will of her own."

Lady Valville, who observed her son's eyes strike fire, and that he was almost trembling with indignation, did not attempt for some minutes to appease him. She was herself stunned at Deletia's very spirited reply. She was astonished at the courage and decision shown in a young woman who knew nothing of the world, and believed herself to be in a state of the most abject dependence. A resolution so firm, in defiance of her wishes, almost disarmed her. She trembled at the idea of the second victim which she was going to sacrifice to her unbounded ambition. She dreaded being scrutinized by a mind so pure; yet it was absolutely necessary to impose on herself a mode of conduct her cowardly heart shrunk from, but must inevitably pursue.

Valville, out of all patience at the

silence of his mother, cried in wild transport, "What is to be done? Why, madam, don't you speak?—You who instigated the letter to Miss Granville perhaps dictated the insolent reply?"

"Be patient," said her ladyship, with assumed gentleness, "I will bring the perverse girl to her senses. I will talk to, and threaten her with a punishment that will soon subdue her courage, if she is not to be persuaded. Before a week is elapsed, depend upon it, Valville, you shall lead her to the altar."

"Let it be so, madam," he answered in a resolute voice, "or I will proclaim to the world—"

"Hold, Valville," exclaimed her ladyship, in a tone of wild despair, "you surely would not be so barbarous as to betray a mother, who for your sake has been led to deeds at which humanity shudders; whose aspiring ambition bade her pluck from the fairest form—"

Lady Valville put her hand to her forehead, and trying to recollect herself, added, " I wander strangely — I know not what I say — my very brain is on fire with the terrible recollections which crowd upon me, and which no penances or absolution can wash out. Absolution, indeed! Oh God! Who but Thee has power to absolve me from crimes which haunt me in my midnight dreams — which glare upon me in noon's brightest day!"

Valville, now seriously alarmed at his mother's wild incoherence, took her by the arm, and forcibly led her to her chamber. As he did so, she struggled violently, and exclaimed in a voice of shrinking terror, " Whither would you lead me! Oh! look not so furiously on me — have I not promised that you shall marry Deletia — will not that satisfy you?"

Valville having with difficulty placed

his mother on a couch in her dressing-room, left her in the care of Mrs. Abbot, and went himself in search of Mr. Dermont, whom he sent to her immediately.

CHAPTER XXII.

Deletia, shut up for several hours in her dressing-room, listened in fearful apprehension to every step which passed along the gallery, always in expectation that Lady Valville would break in upon her in violent displeasure, in consequence of her rejection of her son. But the day passed away until it was closed without a creature approaching.

The dread of being summoned below prevented her ringing the bell, and though the dinner one had long since sounded, she wanted courage to make her appearance.

At length Victoire entered, her face flushed, and her eyes sparkling with anger, as she had done once before.

"*Voila!* Mademoiselle," exclaimed Victoire, presenting a piece of paper hanging in tatters. "It once was a letter, I was just coming up stairs with it, when that *béta*, the chevâlier, snatched it from me, and said 'Let me see what mischief you have got there, Victoire.'"

"What does this paper mean," replied Deletia. "Who gave it you?"

"*Attendé* and you shall hear. The *jolie Demoiselle* we saw during our *voyage*, came to me this morning in the park. 'May I trust you,' said she to me, 'with this letter to the young lady I met you with at Ilfracombe; and will you deliver it into her own hands?' 'On my *d'honneur*,' said I. She then presented it, when the chevalier, on my way to you, tore it from me—*quel barbare!*"

"After he had torn the letter, as you see Mademoiselle, and he found he could not read it, he gave it me back; but I am afraid it is now impossible to tell one word that is in it."

Deletia just made out the name of Elinor Arden, but the sense was destroyed, from the torn condition of the billet, which was a source of infinite grief and vexation.

Deletia inquired of Victoire whether the family were assembled at dinner, and desired her to take her excuse for not appearing, as she was indisposed.

Victoire informed her only milor Valville dined in the *salle à manger*. That Lady Valville had been seized with a fit, and Mr. Dermont then was with her.

Valville communicated to his mother the circumstance of having detected Victoire conveying a letter privately to Deletia, which he strongly suspected to be from Lord Dorringcourt; and although he found her ladyship still much disturbed in mind, he urged the necessity of using authoritative measures with Deletia.

When Victoire left her, she in vain essayed to make out the contents of

Lady Elinor Arden's letter. She just discovered enough of the import to find there was an invitation to become her guest, but the name of the place was torn away, and also from whence her letter was dated. It was impossible to give it a reply, which hurt and mortified her extremely.

Deletia was roused from the train of painful reflections into which she had fallen by a message immediately to attend Mr. Dermont in the library.

Deletia, though sensible the occurrences of the morning must come to an issue, was unshaken in her resolution, not to be terrified into a compliance so adverse to her inclinations. She, however, descended with trembling steps into the library.

Mr. Dermont met her, with an affected smile of complacent kindness, which he meant should give her confidence.

"Consider me, dear Miss Granville," said he, "what my profession avows, the

friend of the afflicted. Open your heart to me, for it is my holy office to endeavour to heal the wounded mind. To be indulgent to the frailty of humanity, and to impose as few severities on the perverse and rebellious as may be consistent with my conscience."

"I am, however," continued he, in the same gentle tone, "so greatly shocked at the ingratitude of such a young creature as yourself, refusing with determined rudeness, the son of her benefactress; I should think it incumbent to punish you with some degree of severity, if, in compassion to your inexperience, I was uot inclined first to know your motives for a conduct so extraordinary, that I may, if possible, overlook and pardon your first transgression.

"To those, sir," replied Deletia, with modest dignity, "who profess themselves of the Catholic faith, your punishments and absolutions would, no doubt, have a proper influence; but pardon me, if

I say, that in the early principles of religion in which I was educated, and have in my heart professed, I cannot be of opinion, that any mortal being has power to absolve another from those failings incidental to humanity; the Almighty Father of the universe can alone do that."

The dark and threatening brow of Mr. Dermont, as it angrily scowled upon Deletia, nearly disarmed her. But, after a moment, he relaxed again into assumed placidity; and, as he crossed himself, he cried with uplifted eyes, "Blessed Virgin, look down in pity on this child of sin and error! Poor deluded heretic as thou art, I will yet pray for thee, and hope thy conversion. In that hope I desire to know your reason for such rebellious conduct."

"Not, sir, I hope rebellious," returned she; "give it not so harsh a term, surely to compel me to form an alliance so adverse to my taste, were to exercise a

species of tyrannic cruelty, not consistent in one who professes to act from the impulse of conscience."

"Are you not sensible," interrupted he, with mild entreaty, "of your obligations to Lady Valville, in cherishing you from childhood until now, with all the tenderness of a parent; and are no sacrifices to be made on your part for such transcendent goodness?"

"Every sacrifice," replied Deletia, with firmness, "which duty and gratitude require, should be made on my part, however wretched my future existence, did I know that my obligations to Lady Valville were of such a nature as to demand them; but until that can be ascertained, I shall remain resolute in my refusal of Lord Valville."

"It is true," added she, "that her ladyship has protected me; supplied every want from infancy until now. Sheltered me beneath her roof, whether from motives of commiseration for my destitute

condition, or from the closer ties of relationship, I am ignorant. If the former, I will not longer encroach on her bounty; for, although friendless and forlorn, there are, no doubt, situations to be found where I may render myself sufficiently useful as to become independent of her ladyship's bounty."

"But if, indeed," proceeded she, "we are united by kindred connections, why does not her ladyship avow it, and tell me *who* I am, and what are my expectations from her? That she should desire an alliance between her son and a destitute being like myself, is an incongruity that excites my wonder, at a disinterestedness so uncommon. No, sir, Lord Valville, heir to this princely domain, ought to be the husband of some lady of elevated sphere, not the portionless Deletia Granville."

While Deletia was speaking, the varied emotions of the Jesuit did not escape her observation: a livid paleness came over

his countenance; and when she finished addressing him, he waved his hand, and said in a faultering accent, "Retire, young woman. Some other method must be pursued with so intrepid a character."

Mr. Dermont withdrew. He related to Lady Valville the fruitless task which he had performed. The only effect his relation had upon her was a long fit of silent melancholy.

Deletia having freely declared her sentiments, felt more at ease than she had done for some time past.

CHAPTER XXIII.

With impatient anxiety, Lady Elinor Arden waited the result of her billet to Deletia. Several days past away in vain and disappointed expectation. Mortified and offended at the unhandsome return she made for such proffered kindness to a perfect stranger, she requested her brother and sister to remain no longer at Clovelly, but during the present favourable state of the weather, return to Oakley Park.

Lord Dorringcourt had extended his visit at the parsonage longer than he intended, from the extreme solicitude which he experienced in respect to Deletia, hoping, yet doubting, whether she might be prevailed upon to accept his

sister's invitation. Lord Valville's having passed over in total silence, his bold interference in the enterprise in which he found him engaged, was a matter of infinite surprise.

When his lordship came forward to Deletia's rescue, he was ignorant who the person was that attempted to carry her off; but on hearing Lord Valville's name, he was no longer astonished, for his lordship's gallantries had made some noise on the continent, where, more than once, he had chanced to meet him in some of the different courts.

Lady Robina Somerville, alike listless and unhappy in every place they had for the last three months frequented, rejoiced when the day was fixed for their return to Warwickshire, where the days of childhood had been spent so happily, and fancied she should at Oakley Park have more cheerful spirits.

For several succeeding days after Deletia's conference with Mr. Dermont,

the family assembled together as if no threatened evil had ever assailed her. Lord Valville did not make his appearance, and it was some consolation to find that he had left the Abbey for a short period.

Deletia now began to hope the late cloud had blown over, when one morning, during which Lady Valville had been sitting conversing with her more cheerfully than usual, her ladyship opened a morocco case, and taking from it a superb diamond necklace and earrings, asked her if she did not admire them.

"They seem to be suited for a princess," returned Deletia, regarding them with indifference. "They are, I suppose, a family appendage."

Lady Valville changed colour. After a pause of a few minutes, she continued, "I hope they will continue such for many generations to come. My son has desired me, Miss Granville, to present

these diamond ornaments to you, as the person his choice has selected to wear them. He was disarmed of courage to request you to receive them, by your cold rejection, and he has left the Abbey in despair until recalled by your pitying kindness."

" It is impossible," continued her ladyship, " that you could be in earnest when you rejected so advantageous an alliance, which will place you, not merely in affluence, but splendour."

" I am willing," she added, " to pardon your indiscreet conduct to the holy father, and I shall think of it no more, in consideration of your youth and inexperience, if you now act as becomes a dutiful submission to my will. Lord Valville loves you so fondly, that I have acceded to his wishes; for his happiness is not to be put in competition with mere interested views, and I find that he cannot taste peace without you."

"And why, madam," said Deletia with composure, "is my happiness to be so little considered?—I should ill fill the character of a wife, where no reciprocal affection accompanied my vows at the altar. I could have no confidence when I placed no regard, and to wed any man from motives of sordid interest is abhorrent to my nature. Beside, madam, to relinquish my freedom to bestow happiness on a person I find it impossible to love and respect, is a sacrifice for which there appears to be no important motive. A parent may command; and it is the imperious duty of every child to yield to their will, if it is to afford them joy, or to place that parent above indigence or misfortune.

"I know not what claim," continued Deletia, with a look and voice of earnest inquiry. "Tell me, madam, what yours are upon me, and then ——"

"Is becoming a mother to you," interrupted her ladyship, impatiently,

"when you had none — cherishing — educating — feeding you on my bounty, all set at nought?"

"Heaven forbid!" cried Deletia, bursting into tears. "No, madam! for such tender humanity I owe you much — you shall not find me ungrateful — but so terrible a sacrifice — oh! it is impossible! ———"

"What! is to be united to a young nobleman, handsome, elegant, accomplished, so terrible a sacrifice?

"In truth," added her ladyship, with indignant scorn, "you are greatly to be pitied! No more of your absurd romantic whims I pray you, Deletia. I have been very patient, and more lenient than you merit. Now if persuasion will not do"———

"Rather, madam," exclaimed the weeping Deletia, "send me an outcast from your mansion." ——

"An outcast you shall be," cried Lady Valville, darting a look of fury

upon her, "for you belong to none— you are under my entire controul—and tremble if it is exercised upon you."——

"By what authority," returned she, with earnest supplication, "do you, madam, allow me to ask, take this power over me? If you knew my parents, tell me who they were—their names—Oh! in mercy tell me to whom I belong?—Wherefore should my origin be veiled in mystery?"

Deletia threw herself on her knees before Lady Valville—she snatched her hand, and looked with the most piteous inquiry in her face. But her ladyship replied not, she appeared to be gasping for breath. At length she snatched her hand away which Deletia tenderly held, and uttering a wild shriek, she flew out of the room with the rapidity of lightning, leaving Deletia in amazement on the floor.

Deletia, of late perfectly convinced that her ladyship was subject to par-

tial fits of insanity, now became seriously alarmed at her lamentable condition. She felt, notwithstanding her cruel conduct, a sentiment of pity towards her.

She rose from the floor, and went in search of Mrs. Abbot, whom she requested to go to her lady who was indisposed. To compose the hurry of her own spirits, she strolled into the park.

CHAPTER XXIV.

VALVILLE becoming impatient beyond all bounds, when informed of Deletia's steady perseverance, in the midst of alternate threats and coaxing, now returned to the Abbey.

He told his mother that something decided must be done, for he would fool away his time no longer, and he was absolutely determined to possess Miss Granville.

His mother, averse from renewing any more personal conversation with Deletia, for reasons only known to herself, at length penned a few lines to her, which she desired Mr. Dermont to present.

"To Miss Granville.

"All persuasion, all argument proving in vain, either from the reverend father or myself, I am unwillingly compelled, Deletia, to command you, on the peril of a punishment at once terrible to endure, to prepare for your nuptials with Lord Valville, which I purpose shall take place in the course of next week.

"Your wedding habiliments are ordered. They will be suited to the elevated rank in which you are intended to move.

"You ask, poor deluded child, by what authority I exercise such power over you. Inclosed is a transcript from part of your father's will, by which you will observe that my power is unlimited. Dare to thwart it, and tremble for the event.

"If you at length yield to the wishes of Lord Valville, by accepting the high honour which he intends conferring upon

you, every mark of indulgence will be shown. But, if, on the contrary, you still resist persuasion, Mr. Dermont has my express order to conduct you to solitary confinement, in a remote part of the Abbey, which has been shut up for years.

"I give you this day to determine on your future destiny.

Granville Abbey, G. VALVILLE."
February 26, 17—.

The copy of Mr. Granville's will, alluding to Deletia, was as follows:

"I consign the entire disposal of my only child Deletia Granville, the remaining issue of my former wife, the Lady Deletia Granville, to my present one, Viscountess Valville. My daughter, the aforesaid Deletia Granville, being sole and rightful heiress to the estates and domains of Granville Abbey, it is my desire that my daughter shall be united

to Lord Viscount Valville, the son of my present Lady.

"On the event of the union taking place before Deletia Granville attains her one-and-twentieth year, Lord Valville shall bear the ancient name and arms of my family.

"I appoint my wife, Viscountess Valville, sole guardian for my child."

Mr. Dermont, though by no means pleased with his embassy, was obliged to undertake it.

As he delivered the packet to Deletia, "I hope, young lady," said he, "this letter will have more influence over you than my wholesome advice, and you will become sensible of your blind delusion. At present yours are only mistaken errors, and when you make acknowledgment of them, they may soon be washed away. May our holy mother convert and open your eyes to the right faith!"

Deletia became too greatly agitated

and anxious to know the contents of the packet to make any reply.

Mr. Dermont, that she might peruse it, withdrew.

A mist came over Deletia's eyes, and a faintness seized her as she read the copy of her father's will.

"Ah! how impossible," exclaimed she, in a tone of deep despondence, "to struggle against the unhappy fate marked out for me! It is, alas, inevitable!—Was it for this I wished to know who was my father!—In leaving me an heiress he has bequeathed me to splendid misery—To wed Lord Valville!—to be the wife of a man who now solicits my hand but for the sake of my wealth!—to be doubly the daughter of a woman who has never shown either tenderness or delicacy towards me, but would yield me a victim to her sordid ambition—oh it is terrible!—Better, far better, to have been born to virtuous poverty, to have lived in the lowliest cottage caressed

and beloved, than be consigned to a wretched existence in a magnificent prison!"

Deletia shuddered when she recurred to the near affinity between Lady Valville and her, and all the painful circumstances connected with it. She at once saw the powerful motive for urging an immediate union with her son, since, notwithstanding her father's desire to unite them, no force could hereafter compel her to give his lordship her hand when she had come of age; nor deprive her of the rightful inheritance of her family.

To contend with her mother-in-law, Deletia knew to be impossible. The marriage was most important for realizing the ambitious views she had formed for her son, no wonder then that she so eagerly enforced the necessity it should take place. She could not but wonder, however, at the unlimited power which her father had given her ladyship. Yet when she reverted to the fishing-house,

the fragment containing a subject of such horrid import, she could not help thinking that all was not right, and that some wicked arts had been practised to effect events veiled in a degree of mystery she had no power at present to develope.

Long did Deletia ponder and dwell upon the contents of the paper which lay before her. After mature reflection, she judged it wisest to appear, at least to yield to Lady Valville's wishes, and in the short week left to aid her purpose, to regain her liberty, by endeavouring to make her escape from the Abbey. Destitute and solitary as was her situation, a ray of hope yet cheered her, in the possibility of being able to discover the residence of Lord Dorringcourt's amiable sisters. His lordship had offered her their protection. They were a family of whose honourable and noble disinterestedness she was assured; and though she knew but by imperfect surmise, what

were the contents of Lady Elinor's letter, yet as her ladyship had once written to her, no impropriety could exist in her endeavouring to seek them out, if she could only reach London in safety.

Wild and impossible as appeared the scheme, yet the horror of her impending fate seemed to render every difficulty surmountable, if she could but prevail on Victoire to be the companion of her flight. Some valuable ornaments had been presented to her at Bath by Lady Valville; also a hundred pounds in notes and cash, which she had preserved.

Deception was repugnant to her nature; but, in so desperate a cause, she hoped to be forgiven in addressing the following letter to Lady Valville.

"To Viscountess Valville.

"Madam,

"When evils are inevitable, they must be endured with submission, however

adverse they may prove to the incli nation.

"Finding it is in vain to contend with the will of a father I, alas! had the misfortune never to know, I am left without the power to disobey his mandate.

"I have the honour to remain,

"Your ladyship's

"Obedient humble servant,

"DELETIA GRANVILLE.

"Friday."

Lady Valville, who had given up all expectation of a favourable reply from Deletia, flew with delight to her son, after perusing her short but satisfactory epistle.

Her point once gained, she permitted Deletia to remain for the day in the seclusion of her own apartment unmolested.

Deletia, in the mean time, was meditating, how it would be possible to escape in the evening of the following day from

the Abbey. She was too well known by the inhabitants of Clovelly to risk showing herself amongst them ; but by taking an unfrequented path through the park, she thought it might be possible to reach Bideford, and proceed thence by different conveyances to London. When arrived there, if she could only trace Lord Dorringcourt's sisters, she felt assured of a safe and honourable asylum.

Victoire, faithful, good-natured, and tenderly attached to Deletia, promised to accompany her in her flight.

Had Deletia been possessed of any worldly knowledge, she at once would have seen the difficulty and danger attendant on the fulfilment of her scheme ; and that in a remote county, where even a peasant could not pass without being recognised, it would prove difficult to escape observation. But her case was desperate ; flight was her last, and only resource ; she, therefore, saw not the perils before her, nor the next to impos-

sibility, of travelling, even under disguise, without detection.

Having arranged her plans with Victoire, who promised to be on the alert, she endeavoured to acquire some degree of composure before she joined the family at dinner. Disastrous as was her situation, and cheerless her future prospects, a sentiment of tender regret came over her, as she cast her eyes around on every object familiarised and endeared from her earliest recollection. The tears came into her eyes as she sat at table for the last time, and her resolution almost gave way to cowardice, when she dwelt on the possible dangers to which, in a short time, she was voluntarily going to expose herself; and what a forlorn being she might become, cast as a stranger in a large city, without a home, or a friend to receive her.

But when her eyes were directed towards the countenance of Lord Valville, who was placed opposite to her, and who,

in his looks and manner wore an expression of proud triumph, every imaginary ill died away when put in competition with the invincible repugnance she felt at the bare idea of being allied to him; and new courage and resolution seemed to be given her.

CHAPTER XXV.

At length midnight arrived, and every person in the Abbey was at rest. Before morning dawned, Deletia had dressed herself in the homely garments which Victoire had procured for her, and at the hour appointed she silently stole into her chamber. They descended into the great hall, where reigned the most profound stillness. They reached the outer buildings, and proceeded, without uttering a word, along the avenue. It was a serene morning, clear and frosty. The lawn was covered with the white down of the hoar frost, which lightly feathered the leafless trees; no sound was heard except the low and distant murmurs of

the waves, and nothing impeded their trembling footsteps.

Deletia, almost fainting with apprehension, expressed her fears to Victoire, who, delighted with the idea of seeing the world, cheered and gave her support.

It was so early when they reached the porter's lodge, that neither he nor his wife were risen; and they passed over the high style adjoining the great gate, which separated the park from the road, without detection.

Deletia here paused for an instant to take breath, for she was panting and trembled violently as she cast her eyes for the last time on the scene of her childhood, she could almost have exclaimed, in the words of an elegant author, "*Adieu vous contrée qui me fut si chere, vous montagnes, vous tranquilles, et fideles vallées. Adieu vous fleurs qui j'ai planté. Je vous laisse pour toujours.*"

"*Dieu merci,*" cried Victoire, "we have got away safe. — Oh, mademoiselle! if you are so *triste* we shall never get on at all; it is a long *promenade* we have to take. — Do lay hold of my arm, and do not think of the past."

When Deletia really found herself beyond the boundary of the park, and on the high road to Bideford, she began to feel some confidence, and flattered herself that all danger was over. The town lay extended before them, on the side of a distant hill, and they were now more than half way from Clovelly, when the trampling of a horse close behind made them start. Victoire gave an involuntary scream, *O mon Dieu!* exclaimed she, we are lost. There is *notre pére*, Monsieur Dermont. Deletia would have fled from his presence, so terrified was she at being discovered.

"Stop, stop, wicked, perverse young woman," exclaimed he, calling after her, "is this your dutiful submission pro-

mised to the best of women; to your lady step-mother. Shame on your arts and disguise; so young, and yet so cunning."

"I shall now," continued the priest, "conduct you back in safety, and henceforth advise a proper place of security for your asylum."

"For you, Victoire, I shall consider no punishment too severe to inflict upon you."

"Victoire," cried Deletia, in the midst of her own distress, "is not to blame. She, sir, is innocent of any ill intention. — Punish her not then — on me let all reproach rest, for I alone am the aggressor."

"We will talk on that subject," said Mr. Dermont, "another time, at present I shall conduct you both to Granville Abbey."

Deletia, overwhelmed with amazement and terror, stood the picture of despair before Mr. Dermont, who, notwithstand-

ing her disguised attire, immediately knew and detected her in her flight.

He had gone the night before, (of which Deletia was ignorant,) to administer extreme unction to a dying person at Bideford, and was returning back to the Abbey in time for breakfast, when he discovered Deletia and Victoire walking a quick even pace on the road-side. Before he rode quite up them, he fancied their persons were known to him; and on drawing near found that he had not been mistaken.

Sunk to the lowest ebb of misery, Deletia silently gave herself up to her fate.

With calm dignity she said to Mr. Dermont, "I seek not, sir, to palliate my conduct, or to offer any justification in my own behalf. It was my wish to escape, if possible, from a destiny so repugnant to my inclination. That my enterprise has been defeated, I must ever lament. I now, sir, consider myself

your prisoner. Lead me, then, to my captivity, to which I shall unrepiningly submit."

"I shall walk my horse beside you," cried Mr. Dermont, "until we get back to the Abbey, and then consign you to Lady Valville, who must judge what mode of conduct to pursue towards you. Victoire I shall take under my own cognizance."

Deletia, quite overcome with terror, exhaustion, and fatigue, in attempting to walk, became so extremely faint and giddy, that she would have fallen, if Victoire had not caught her by the arm. With some difficulty they led her to a cottage near the road, where the good dame laid her on her bed, and prevailed on Deletia, when somewhat restored, to swallow a draught of new milk, the only refreshment which she had to offer.

In the meanwhile, Mr. Dermont, having sent off a boy to Bideford for a post-chaise, regaled himself during his absence

on the good woman's nice brown bread, fresh churned butter, and a bowl of milk.

When the carriage arrived, Mr. Dermont placed himself in it between the two fugitives.

It was not till the hour of breakfast at Granville Abbey that Deletia and Victoire were first missed. Servants were then sent in all directions. Valville, storming like a mad man, had just returned from Clovelly and the parsonage, to which he had found his way, in fruitless search of Deletia, when Mr. Dermont entered, conducting in each hand the run-aways.

Deletia stood pale and motionless. Lady Valville regarded the three with astonishment. "What may all this mean," exclaimed she. "Was Miss Granville and Victoire then with you?"

Mr. Dermont briefly related his rencontre.

Whether it was pity or alarm which took possession of her ladyship it were

hard to define, as she gazed on the pallid countenance of Deletia. But, after contemplating her for some minutes with a sort of convulsive shudder, she said calmly, "I perceive that you are ill, therefore I hope sufficiently punished. Go to bed, child."

Deletia did in truth feel not merely ill from bodily fatigue and unusual exertion, but sick at heart. She gladly retired to her chamber, and threw herself on her bed, in deep despondence and anguish of mind.

Victoire, the faithful companion of her flight, was placed by Mr. Dermont in solitary confinement.

Mrs. Abbot was sent to watch over Deletia, that she did not again escape. But Mrs. Abbot was so gentle, kind, and considerate, she rather soothed the grief of Deletia, than proved a painful restraint.

Deletia's illness in the course of a few days increased to such an alarming

height, her life became in danger, and Lady Valville was under the disagreeable necessity of calling in a physician from Exeter. His watchful attention and experienced skill, in a short period partially restored her to health; but he pronounced that her disease was more of the mind than body, and recommended every proper indulgence, with the freedom of air and exercise, which she obtained under the care of Mrs. Abbot.

Lady Valville, dreading to meet her wan and dejected countenance, never ventured into her apartment, but contented herself with ceremonious messages of enquiry. Neither did Valville intrude himself into her presence.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

Printed by Strahan and Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square, London.